

COMMEMORATOR

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CCBPP Open House Inspires Volunteers and Supporters

On Sunday, April 16, 2006, the Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party (CCBPP) hosted an Open House in its newly expanded and renovated office at 1837 Alcatraz Avenue in South Berkeley, California, where volunteers from CCBPP, which publishes *The Commemorator* newspaper and runs the Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign, hosted more than 50 volunteers and supporters. Melvin Dickson, CCBPP Chairman, along with many CCBPP volunteers and Board members, spoke to the accomplishments of CCBPP programs and acknowledged the 40th Anniversary of the founding of the Black Panther Party. They invited longtime supporters and new friends alike to join in CCBPP's revolutionary struggle to organize and fight for the goals of the original 10-point program of the Black Panther Party (BPP).

The event celebrated the completion of the renovation of additional

office space adjacent to the offices from which CCBPP has administered its programs since 1990. The additional space, more than doubling the available office space for CCBPP, was renovated through the work of volunteers who sheetrocked and painted walls, laid donated carpet and baseboard and installed donated computers.

Longtime CCBPP volunteer Anthony Jones and CCBPP Board member and former BPP member Terry Cotton donated their artistic talents to paint more than a dozen vignettes from BPP and civil rights history to adorn the walls of the new space. The mural images remind all who enter of a profound history of struggle, sacrifice and victories. Scenes include the famous scene of Huey P. Newton being welcomed to the People's Republic of China in 1971 by Zhou En-lai, the Prime Minister; portraits of BPP martyrs Fred Hampton and Mark Clark; the famous



Photo by Geoff Krohn

CCBPP volunteer organizer Aqueila Lewis (far right) leads audience in singing "Lift Every Voice and Sing," at CCBPP's Open House April 16.

Rosa Parks booking photo, after her courageous stand against racism and discrimination in the Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott; and scenes from the BPP fight against Sickle Cell Anemia and others.

As people arrived at the event, they admired the scenes on the walls. Old friends and comrades shared history and lore with each other and with young activists eager to learn the legacy of

Continued on page 6

The Nation Mourns First Lady of the Civil Rights Movement

In Memoriam

Coretta Scott King

April 28, 1927 – January 30, 2006

By Willow Oak Istarwood

Coretta Scott King, born April 28, 1927 was revered by many Americans as the "first lady of the civil rights movement." She died in her sleep, Monday, January 30, 2006, in Baja California, Mexico. She left four children, Yolanda, the oldest, Martin III, Dexter, and Bernice, the youngest, who was with her when she passed away.

Coretta Scott King dedicated her life to promoting the cause of civil rights, and was most widely known through her work at the side of her husband, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who inspired millions of people around the world to the cause that he championed. After Dr. King was assassinated in 1968, she continued to organize for civil rights, women's rights, and workers' rights. Even before her husband was buried, she went to Memphis to speak to the sanitation workers and lead the march of those striking workers that had brought Dr. King to Memphis, where he had just been killed.

She struggled for more than a decade to get Congress to designate her husband's birthday as a national holiday. Then, finally, in November 1983, Mrs. King witnessed President Ronald Reagan, initially an outspoken opponent of the holiday, signing the historic bill in the Rose Garden of the White House that made Dr. King's birthday a national holiday.

Her amazing strength of character and capacity to carry on with the struggle, no matter how great the odds or powerful the enemy, was something she acquired early on from her family on their farm in Heiberger,

Continued on page 11



Courtesy of Dorothy Bordenave/MLK Center for Non-Violence

After Dr. King's death, Coretta Scott King led the campaign to build a Peace Center in Atlanta, based on her commitment to promote Dr. King's values and legacy for economic justice and civil rights.

Inside This Issue

The Point is to Change History	P. 2
Huey's Corner: Tax laws used against BPP	P. 5
Mumia Honored in Paris	P. 8
Compton Council person supports Fitzgerald	P. 8
In Memoriam: Richard Pryor	P. 7

EDITORIAL

The Point is to Change History Not to Continue Blaming the Victim

Learned men of Columbia, Princeton and Harvard called "specialists" by the mainstream press, with their big academic research grants from foundations and corporations who have their own agendas, have recently published "new studies" and books with titles like *Black Males Left Behind*, and *Reconnecting Disadvantaged Young Men*, and *Dropouts of America* that are all telling us "Life keeps getting worse for black men."

These "revelations" are making headlines and are being lauded in how they "go beyond the traditional approaches to looking at the plight of black men, especially in determining the scope of unemployment." It seems they have finally discovered that "official unemployment rates can be misleading because they fail to include those no longer trying to find work or incarcerated." This has been the case for many decades. These studies offer handy statistics to describe the conditions of life in our communities we have been suffering with and struggling with for decades and need solutions, not more studies:

"Especially in the inner cities, finishing high school is the exception, legitimate work is scarcer than ever and prison is almost routine, with incarceration rates climbing for blacks even as urban crime declines."

These studies cover-up the cause of the described injustice and speak nothing of those who are profiting from the systemic processes that create and enforce these conditions, and have been since Lyndon Johnson launched his so-called War on Poverty, which we experienced as outright war against the poor.

The studies conclude that what is needed is more programs — private and government — to train, educate, guide and counsel young black men, to build their character and help them (read: individually) succeed in the mainstream.

The government no longer pretends to provide solutions. They stopped deluging us with poverty pimps and give-the-helpless-a-hand programs that amounted to a second-class band-aid for the jobless.

Those lucky enough to have a job are working harder and making less. Today, the average job is paying \$5 a week less than what was paid in 1999. Wages have not kept up with inflation and the real income for at least 60% of the U.S. population has been falling for 25 years.

General Motors recently laid off 40,000 MORE American workers to relocate overseas where labor is cheap and environmental laws are non-existent or not enforced. The academics and bourgeois journalists began to call this phenomena of moving production to another location, domestically or internationally, to escape local union demands, the "run-away shop," as if



Black Panther Party Free Breakfast (Survival) Program, not only met the day-to-day needs of children in the community who were hungry, but it also contributed to educating the community through community participation in working for the negation of capitalist politics, racial and class oppression.

the shop "runs away" of its own accord. Shops do not run away. Capitalist robber barons and their lackeys, with the overt aid and support of the US government, move manufacturing to the places where labor is cheapest.

This capitalist assault takes place at the expense of workers around the globe, while the majority of black men are continually marginalized on the bottom rung of the American ladder and therefore used to keep the overall wage level as low as possible for the majority.

Since the end of the Vietnam War, major US corporations have closed their factories in droves and moved elsewhere. They have moved away from the practice of hiring full-time American workers and giving health care and other benefits that contribute to a stable working class community. Meanwhile, the fastest growing industry in the United States is the construction and running of more prisons — and often in rural, largely white communities where formerly residents would not allow a prison near their community. And why is that? Because in those working class communities people have also lost the manufacturing jobs that once made America's economy one of the strongest in the world and they too, are desperate for work and are forced to look to the prison industry as their hope for relief. It is the other side of the coin of the oppression, with one worker being pitted against another.

In the days of American Imperial ascendancy, American workers were thrown some crumbs from the table of the imperialists. In those bygone days, even some of those at the bottom rungs were able to get a little bit more. But bygone days are bygone. In this era of globalization, the reactionary inter-communalist capitalist class has launched an all-out assault on the ability of workers to have anything more than the bare means of survival. Still at

the bottom, people of color continue to take the worst of the beating.

The number of people who are hungry because they can't afford to buy enough food rose to 38.2 % in 2004, including 13.3 million children living with an unsteady supply of food. The number continues to rise. In December 2004, the U.S. conference of Mayors determined that the demand for emergency food went up 12% from the previous year, and demand for space in homeless shelters increased 6%. Black men face a worse situation than most.

With the shift in factory jobs, unskilled workers of all races have lost ground, but none more than black men. A recent *New York Times* article citing several sociological studies concluded that 18 to 35 year-old demography points out that, "Black men in the United States face a far more dire situation than is portrayed by common employment and education statistics."

"The share of young black men without jobs has climbed relentlessly with only slight pause during the economic peak of the late 1990s. In 2000, 65% of black male high school dropouts in their 20s were jobless — that is unable to find work, not seeking it or incarcerated. By 2004, the share had grown to 72%, compared with 34% of whites and 19% of Hispanic dropouts. Even when high school graduates were included, half of black men in their 20s were jobless in 2004, up from 46% in 2000."

Incarceration rates climbed in the 1990s and reached historic highs in the past few years. In 1995, 16% of black men in their 20s who did not attend college were in jail or prison. By 2004, 21% were incarcerated. By their mid-30s, 6 of 10 black men who had dropped out of school had spent time in prison.

Low-income communities face government cuts in medical care, schools, public housing programs and libraries while at the same time "law and order" programs are implemented

Continued on page 14

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Government is Still Failing New Orleans' Poor and Minorities

By Commemorator staff

Across the Gulf Coast states of Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana, hundreds of thousands of Katrina and Rita survivors are still struggling to survive. Hundreds of thousands more survivors scattered across the United States are trying to rebuild their lives with insufficient resources. For those hardest hit — the black and poor — governments and their affiliated organizations at the national, state and municipal levels have done little to help meet people's basic needs, despite grand promises made over nine months ago, and the legal obligations.

The black churches were one of the first groups to organize and provide material relief and recovery on the Gulf Coast. In Houston, Texas, churches like the Pan African Orthodox Christian Church, the Memorial Baptist Church and the Spring Tabernacle Church have made themselves centers of support for the 150,000 local survivors who had been transported, in one way or another, to Houston after being stranded in New Orleans with nothing for a week. These groups collected and provided food, clothing, money, housing and job assistance.

Churches local to the Gulf Coast, as well as hundreds from across the nation, were quick to respond during the first days after Katrina struck. Sharon Avril of the African American Episcopal Church in Sacramento, California, who was referred to *The Commemorator* by our a Sacramento correspondent, started mobilizing her community the day the eye of Katrina hit Louisiana on August 29. After a number of setbacks, including being stopped in Texas by Homeland Security, Avril's Prayer Caravan delivered two 18-wheelers loaded with supplies to Homer, Louisiana. The group organized a distribution center there at Allan Chapel A.M.E and also provided grief counseling.

Avril told *The Commemorator* that Homer was also hard hit by Hurricane Rita and that "Nothing was getting to small towns." While the media has focused on the impact of the flooding on New Orleans, dozens of small, poor and rural towns all along the Gulf were just as devastated by the winds and flooding of Katrina and Rita. One Mississippi resident named Clifton told *The Commemorator* that "from Gulfport to Long Beach and Waveland it was pretty close to wiped out."

As in Louisiana, the poor and black in Mississippi did not have the financial means to evacuate before the hurricanes struck. And as in New Orleans, residents of the poverty stricken towns of Mississippi are angry at the government's negligence and misplaced priorities. In gambling towns like Biloxi, casinos seemed to reappear overnight, while eight months later the people are still finding dead bodies as they clear their leveled homes. Across the state, 99,000 people are still living in trailers. Clifton said, "It's amazing how they



Biloxi, Mississippi, immediately after it was directly hit by Hurricane Katrina in August, 2005

got those casinos up and running so fast. They're up and running, but people don't have a place to live."

With regard to the lack of aid coming from national sources, Clifton pondered, "My big question is this: What happened to those millions of dollars that people donated? It seems as though it has never surfaced. That was enough money to, if nothing else, clean up the area." In the meantime, "The only work that's being done is

The unemployment rate for displaced victims increased from 22.6 to 34.7 percent.

people doing it themselves."

Assisting them, where possible, are various grassroots organizations such as Common Ground, which is based in the Algiers neighborhood of New Orleans, on higher ground that was spared from the massive flooding. Common Ground was co-founded by Malik Rahim, a longtime organizer and resident of New Orleans, and a founding member of the New Orleans branch of the BPP. Common Ground is a collective that organized in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and started several community clinics and developed a volunteer program to assist hurricane victims in cleaning up debris and gutting their homes. They have prepared over 1,000 homes for reconstruction over the last 9 months, however, the residents are still waiting for permission from city authorities to start construction so they can move back.

There are also many church supported organizations in and around New Orleans, and along the Mississippi coastline, and north as far as Jackson, who are still running massive reconstruction programs that rely on hundreds of volunteers coming down into the area from church congregations around the country.

Yet it would be overly optimistic to say that most low-income hurricane survivors across the Gulf have felt the reach of these grassroots organizations. The work they have

done is greatly needed and has had a profound impact. But the voids to be filled in the recovery effort are immense. These organizations are often struggling themselves and must decide where to direct their limited resources.

The Housing Problem

One million evacuees were placed by FEMA and Red Cross in shelters and "temporary housing" far and wide across the country. Not being able to return home, many have been trying to organize where they are. There are 14,000 hurricane survivors in California. In Oakland, evacuees have formed a committee called Hurricane Evacuees Council/Bay Area (HECBA). On Valentines day in February 2006 HECBA organized a "Have a Heart" Katrina refugee press conference outside the FEMA regional office in Oakland, California to demand that FEMA halt the hotel evictions and come up with an immediate solution to the homelessness crisis faced by (mostly) poor or black victims. Several sister protests were held across the U.S. during the subsequent two weeks.

Among those who spoke at the Valentine's Day event was Bertrand Todd. He is one of tens of thousands of refugees of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita who had been frantically trying to secure permission to stay in their federally funded hotel rooms past the February 13 deadline announced by the Federal Emergency Management Agency a few days earlier. Finally, on the very day of the deadline, while thousands of victims across the country were being forcibly evicted from their rooms, Todd received word that he would be granted an extended stay — to March 1.

At the Oakland press conference, refugees and their supporter's spoke of FEMA's failure to prioritize developing permanent housing — a necessary first step for hurricane victims trying to rebuild their lives. HECBA spokeswoman and New Orleans resident CC Campbell-Rock said, "FEMA is playing a heartless game of cat and mouse with us... It is unclear how FEMA decides who will get hotel extensions

and who will not. Evictions must be stopped."

In a list of demands to FEMA, HECBA addressed the government's failure to provide sufficient resources for refugees to conduct housing and job searches. Speakers cited an overall shortage of help with financial assistance, transportation, health care, employment information centers and childcare. Meanwhile, there is an overabundance of bureaucracy and discrimination based on race, sex, age and economic background. To add to the stress of searching for shelter, jobs and basic necessities in the face of impending eviction deadlines, those staying in hotels or motels are often being shuffled from room to room within the same facility. In short, multiply Todd and Cooper's situation by the hundreds of thousands.

The temporary housing which FEMA has provided for a fraction of the homeless evacuees remaining in the Gulf Coast states has been insufficient at best. For the estimated 100,000 Mississippians who had their homes destroyed, for instance, FEMA has provided 34,000 travel trailers which are not heavy enough to stand up to hurricane force winds. And, of the total of 135,000 requests for trailers which FEMA received, only half have been filled.

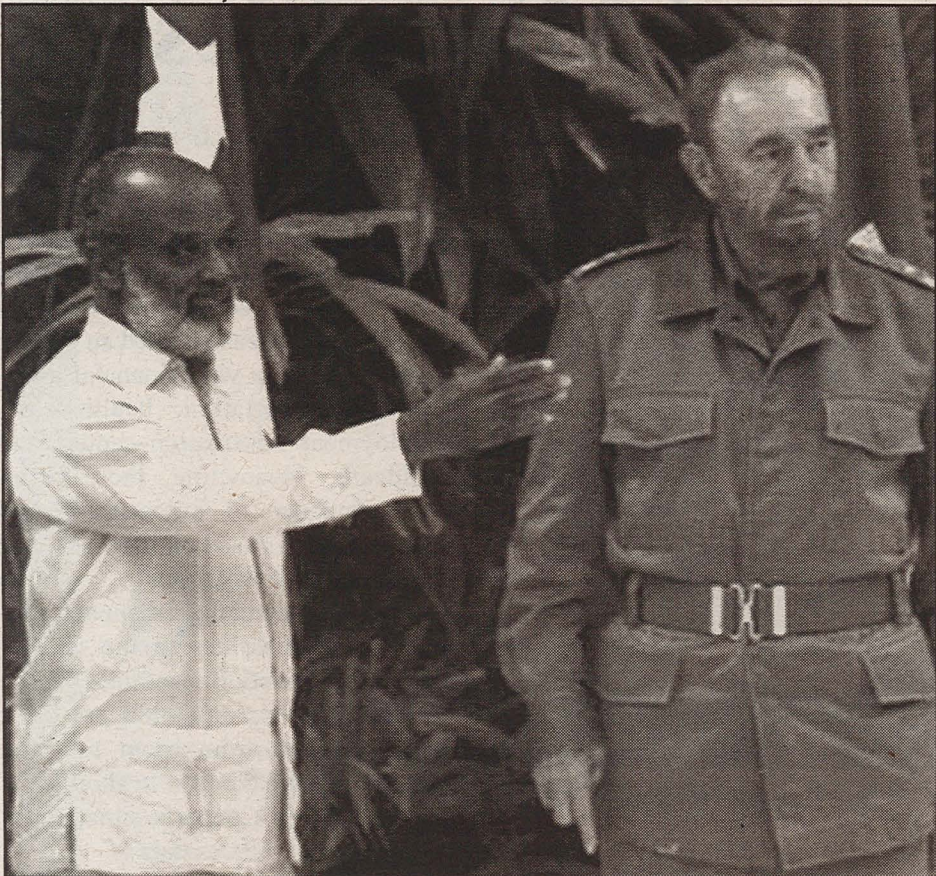
Campbell-Rock pointed out that the government's failures concerning housing were not merely a matter of negligence, but criminal negligence — quite literally. She cited its refusal to comply with the Stafford Act, a six-year old Federal law stating that victims of any disaster in the US are entitled to 18 months of housing

Eviction Notices Despite Stafford Act

In the last two and a half months landlords have been posting eviction notices on tenants' doors for a hearing set for three to five days later. When the tenants do not show up for the hearing because they are not currently residing in their home do to the damage and are therefore unaware the summons has been posted, the evictions are often approved while with the eviction victim is *in absentia*. If the court rules in favor of the landlord, 24 hours later the landlord can remove all the tenant's belongings from the unit. A coalition of local housing groups, activists and tenants called NO-HEAT have formed to fight evictions and the rising rents, using a combination of legal tactics and direct action. NO-HEAT members who had been residents of public Housing residents took action Saturday, June 3, to take back their homes despite the efforts of Housing Authority Of New Orleans (HANO) and HUD authorities to stop them. Residents rallied at the Florida, St. Bernard, C.J. Peete and Magnolia sites, forcing their way through locked and boarded doors to begin gutting and repairing apartments themselves, so they could move back in.

Continued on page 15

OPINION



Courtesy of Kilu Nyasha

President-elect of Haiti Rene Preval is welcomed by Cuban President Fidel Castro at the Revolution Palace in Havana, Cuba, Thursday, April 13, 2006. Preval was invited to visit Cuba by Castro. (AP Photo/ Javier Galeano)

The Election in Haiti

By Nia Imara

The Haitian people have given the world another gift. On February 7, and in the days of protest that followed, Haitian voters ruptured another link in the chain of imperialism by demanding that their election of René Préval to President, a member of the Lavalas Party, be honored. That the balance of forces was, and is still, so lopsided makes this victory all the more poignant.

Consider the sides. The Haitian elite had everything in their favor, at least on paper: money, the media, weapons, the Interim Government of Haiti (IGH), the police, gangs composed of former military members, and the backing of UN troops (MINUSTAH). Finally, they had the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP), with which they could carry through the final steps of voter fraud, if their other methods of brute force and intimidation were unsuccessful.

Meanwhile poor, working Haitians, who are largely supporters and members of the Lavalas Party, overcame every design intended to prevent them from voting: shortages of registration offices, daily violent repression meant as a warning to stay out of the political process, and the imprisonment of their leaders. All this even before election day; all this on

top of the daily and systematic terrorism of poverty — a direct legacy of slavery and ongoing imperialism.

The election

On election day, which had been rescheduled five times in as many months, Haitian voters determined to cast their ballots in the face of continued obstructions. The limited number of voting centers often opened late and lacked sufficient ballots. As with the registration offices, polling places were disproportionately disorganized and even lacking altogether in rural and urban poor communities. After traveling miles to one of these inconveniently located centers, voters were often told that they were ineligible or that the polling place had been relocated at the last minute.

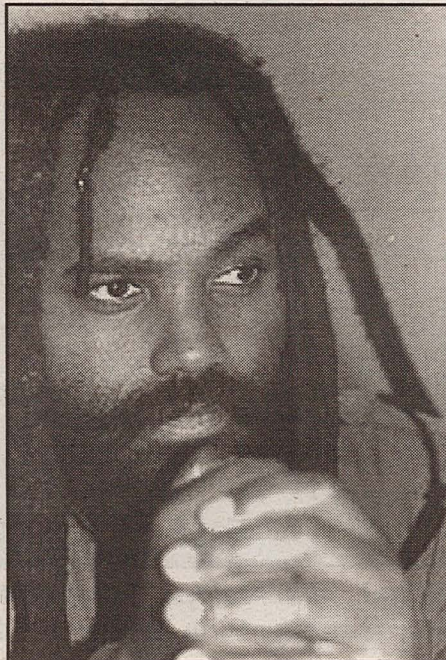
But the people patiently persisted. And when the situation became entirely unacceptable, the people broke into protests, forcing the IGH to yield by keeping some polling centers open late. It was in this way — patience combined with a refusal to resign themselves to purposeful disorder — that over 60% of the 3.5 million registered voters did vote.

But hardly had the final vote been cast than the next wave of

Continued on page 12

The Empire of Fear

By Mumia Abu-Jamal



Courtesy of CFFMAU

American Civil Liberties Union, the American Friends Service Committee, *The Advocate* (a publication of the National Law Center at Washington University), the Black Peoples' Party, the Children's March for Survival, Common Cause, *The Furies* (a radical, feminist publication), Community Bookstore, the DC Statehood Party, the Howard University Committee to Free Angela Davis, the Tenant's Rights Workshop, and Rap, Inc., (a local drug rehabilitation program), among other groups.

What this shows us, is that anybody, and everybody was suspect, and *subject* to informants, and government surveillance.

Here we go again.

And, again, thanks to the utility of fear, we are seeing how virtually silent people are in this asphyxiation of the alleged constitutional rights of the People.

When the Thomas Merton Center is under surveillance because of government suspicion of ties to terrorism, then we are seeing the outer limits of the arrogance of power.

Secret prisons, secret prisoners, gulags of torture and death in the Caribbean, Afghanistan and Iraq, black sites in Eastern Europe — and silence?

Every age is its own. It would be silly to hope for the rebirth of the '60s in this day and time. And yet, the time will surely come, when children will look to their parents and grandparents, and ask "what did you do, Mommy, when dictatorship came?"

"What did you do, when people were thrown into torture chambers?"

"What did you do when people were sent overseas to be tortured?"

"What did you do when the Congress betrayed the Constitution?"

What did you do?

What *are* you doing?

Fear immobilizes; that is its intent.

But hope opens up, as spring opens up the earth.

Don't recreate the '60s. Make this moment, this day, this era, one of speaking out against the Empire. Make it a time for joining together with others who share your fears, and your hopes.

Make it an age of marching against the madness that assaults our senses.

Make it a chance for change, or it will be with us, forever.

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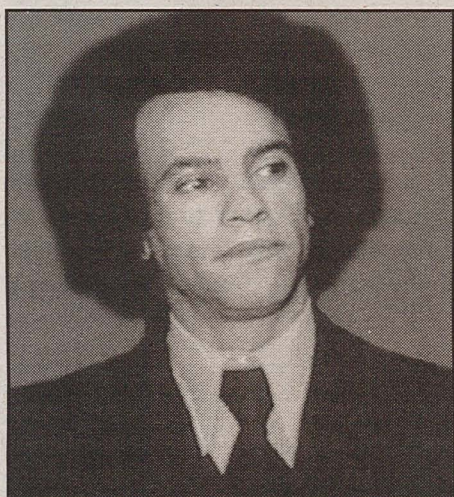
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Archives

Internal Revenue Service and Selective Enforcement of Tax Laws Against the Panthers

Huey's Corner



Dr. Huey P. Newton

Editor's Note: The following article is a continuation from The Commemorator's December 2005 issue. The writing is an excerpt from Dr. Huey P. Newton's 1977 Ph.D. dissertation for the History of Consciousness program at the University of California, Santa Cruz, which will be continued in the next issue of The Commemorator. As the dissertation was a history of the attacks against the Black Panther Party, Newton writes of himself in the third person. In 2003, the thesis, "The War Against the Panthers: A Study of Repression in America," was published as a book by the Huey P. Newton Foundation (Writers and Readers, 1999), and is available at your local bookstore or directly from the Huey P. Newton Foundation.

The first notice the Panthers had that the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) may be interested in their affairs was in 1969-1970, when the Committee on Internal Security of the House of Representatives held a series of hearings about the Party. At one of these hearings, a congressman inquired as to the tax status of the Party and what the IRS knew about its financial affairs, specifically whether the Party filed tax returns or paid taxes.¹³¹ The answer was that since the Panthers were a "political party," just as the Democrats and Republicans, they had no obligation to file returns or pay taxes. Party leaders and their counsel believed that because "political party" was nowhere defined in IRS regulations, the government had no basis for treating them differently from the major established political parties.¹³² The government, particularly IRS, indicated no explicit disagreement with this view.

In fact, however, IRS was already being responsive to the concerns of the Administration and others about the Panthers. On July 18, 1968, the Assistant Commissioner of the IRS directed a memorandum to officers within the agency announcing that:

A Committee is being established to coordinate activities in all Compliance Divisions involving ideological, militant, subversive, radical,

and similar type organizations; to collect basic intelligence data; and to insure that the requirements of the Internal Revenue Code concerning such organizations have been complied with. It is expected that the Committee will function indefinitely.¹³³

The first meeting of this committee, called the Activist Organizations Committee and later ironically named the Special Services, or SS, group, emphasized its mission:

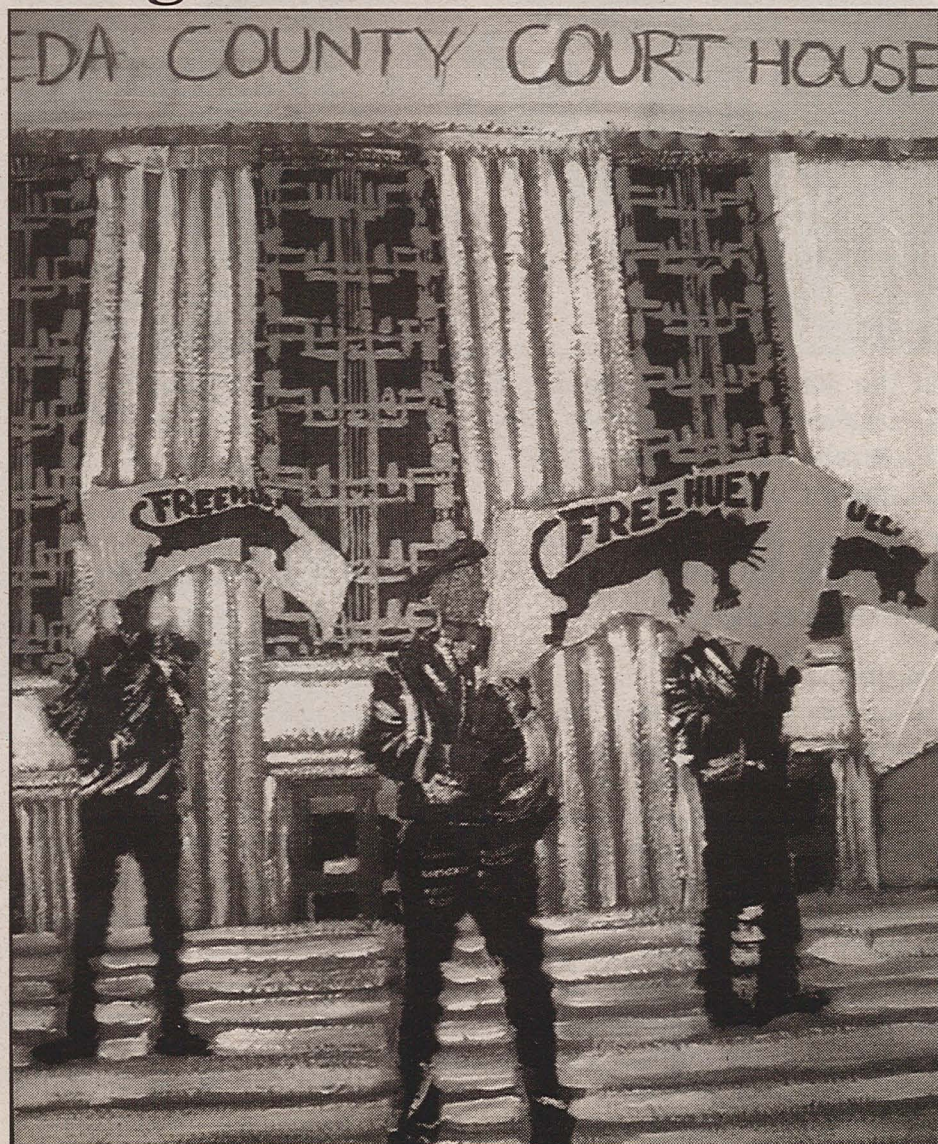
This is an extremely important and sensitive matter in which the highest levels of government are interested and in which at least three Congressional committees are currently conducting investigations. In addition, the Internal Security Division, Department of Justice, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation have files on many of these organizations.¹³⁴

The secretive nature of the committee was also spelled out in this organizational meeting:

...[I]ts [i.e., the SS group's] activities should be disclosed generally only to those persons who need to know, because of its semi-secretive nature. Indeed, action is being taken to obtain top-secret clearance for the full-time Committee's members. Our files will be protected with usual intelligence type security. We do not want the news media to be alerted to what we are attempting to do or how we are operating because the disclosure of such information might embarrass the Administration or adversely affect the Service operations in this area or those of other Federal agencies or Congressional Committees.¹³⁵

In essence then, IRS formed a covert group within the agency for the purpose of selecting out organizations for special enforcement of the tax laws solely on the basis of their political beliefs. While the SS group focused its investigatory and enforcement efforts off against a wide variety of organizations and individuals, it is clear that the Panthers and its leaders were singled out for special attention.

The Party was one of the original twenty-two organizations named by the SS group on March 25, 1969, for investigation to determine "the sources of their funds, the names of ... contributors, whether the contributions given. ... have been deducted as charitable contributions, [and] what we [i.e., IRS] can find out generally about the funds of these organizations.¹³⁶ An early briefing paper from the chairman of the SS group, who held a top secret security clearance, to another government official named only the Party and described it as a "highly structured" organization, with allegedly "thousands" of "soldiers," about whom the SS "identified" approximately five hundred names holding "upper-structure positions" in the party.¹³⁷ When the



In 1968, members of the Black Panther Party demonstrated outside California's Alameda County Courthouse as part of the victorious "Free Huey" campaign.

SS group met on July 29, 1969, they were "furnished several charts concerning the Black Panthers . . . and offered additional material" by a staff member of the Senate Committee on Government Operations.¹³⁸ Even when the SS was formally "phased-out" and its substantive operations transferred to other divisions of IRS, the party was singled out, to wit: "Background, status and briefing papers on BPP investigation discussed and material left with Mr. Willsey."¹³⁹

The BPP first learned that it was an overt target of the IRS in 1974 when several administrative summonses were served on third parties seeking information about the Party, its leaders and contributors. One summons was served on the Bank of America in Oakland, California for all records, whether open or closed accounts, relating to "Huey P. Newton, the Black Panther Party, Free Huey or Defense Fund for Huey P. Newton,

Continued on page 14



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At the May 16 Open House, CCBPP volunteers, (left to right) Kush Amen, Mica Coates, Marina Hoag, Eseibio Halliday and Nia Imara watch historic 1977 video by Lavar Burton about the Oakland Community School.

Open House

Continued from page 1

struggle and the history of the struggle, and learn to carry it on in the current era to the next level and to victory.

The program began with MC Aqueila Lewis, a CCBPP volunteer organizer leading a rousing rendition of "Lift Every Voice and Sing," widely recognized in the United States as the Black national anthem. The entire assembled group of volunteers, supporters and guests sang the anthem together — some with their fists raised, others with their hands crossed and their eyes closed. It was a special moment shared harmoniously by all.

In the first presentation, Melvin Dickson, CCBPP Chairman, proclaimed, "This is the way we reaffirm the goals and principles of Black Panther Party 10 Point Program at the point of practice. Thanks to the volunteers and all those who came to celebrate, today is a very special day for us because, despite the fact that the Black Panther Party officially ended in 1982, the goals, legacy and principles are very powerfully alive as manifested in you — you who are here to continue to learn from the lessons of how it was destroyed and build on the legacy of what the BPP did that worked!"

Ihklar Halliday, a young girl who is a learner in the Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy project read a poem, titled, "What the Li'l Bobby Hutton program means for me."

Historical video film footage about the BPP was shown as part of the program, and CCBPP volunteer Eseibio Halliday read an essay on a video produced by noted actor Lavar Burton that detailed the accomplishments of the Oakland Community Learning Center developed and run by the BPP in the early 1970's. The Learning Center was part of the Survival Programs that Huey P. Newton was delineating as part of a program of "survival pending revolution" in the face of murderous attacks by FBI and police forces that ultimately took the lives of more than 38 members of the Black Panther Party.

The video, part of the commemorative archives of CCBPP, documents not only the training and teaching methods at the learning center but also the values that BPP members were

teaching the young students about caring for their community, respecting their elders and respecting each other.

Pamela Thomas, lead tutor for the Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign Saturday sessions at the South Berkeley Community Church explained the purpose of the campaign for literacy: "We have to view this as a way to continue the struggle for freedom, especially since our Black youth are too often neglected because of racism and capitalism. Too many people think it's cheaper not to spend money on education but to spend it on building more prisons!" Thomas also expressed the need for resources for the campaign, saying, "We may have a stapler that might work, but we ain't got no staples!" The people attending the Open House knew what she was talking about, and reached into their pockets and contributed for pencils and papers, tapes, and CDs for the Literacy Campaign.

Ruth Villa (Jones), 100 years old in July 2006, affectionately referred to by BPP members as "Mother Jones", was the highlight of the program, with her many stories. Reminiscing back to 1968 during Huey Newton's world famous court trial she said, "Huey spoke out in the court room during the Oakland trial to let his 'mother' enter the courtroom, referring to me, and further told them to give me a seat up front, and from that point on, the downtown people referred to me as Huey P. Newton's mother! When they see me coming, they would say 'Make way, that's Huey's mother. Make room for her.' At that remark, the crowd at the Open House burst into laughter.

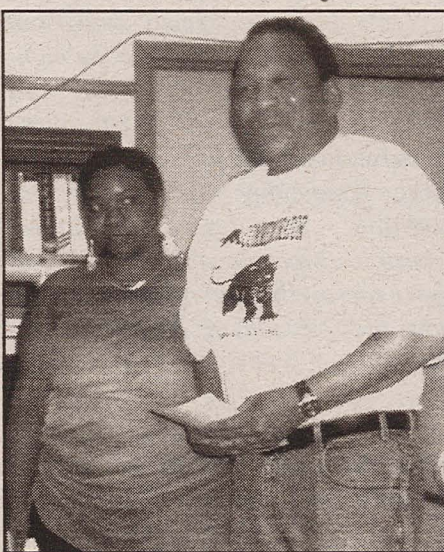
Dickson presented Certificates of Appreciation to various volunteers and supporters who have helped advance the programs of CCBPP. He stated, "Over the years, there has been consistent community support, especially recently for the renovation and expansion of our facility here, and people deserve to be thanked.

Emory Douglas, former BPP Minister of Culture, said, "This celebration highlights what the Black Panther Party stood for and what we must continue to build with *The Commemorator* and the Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign."

At one point all former members of the Black Panther Party were asked to come forward and comment.



Keisha Hackett, a student at BPP Oakland Community School in East Oakland almost 30 years ago, admires vignettes portraying the children at the Oakland Community School and BPP history.

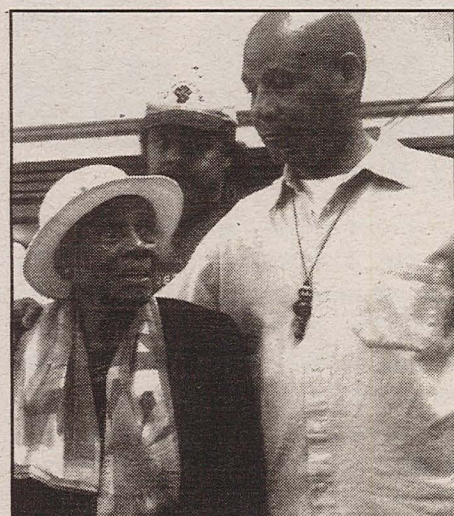


Open House MC Aqueila Lewis (left) listens to CCBPP Chairman Melvin Dickson call for more CCBPP organizers to carry on the struggle.

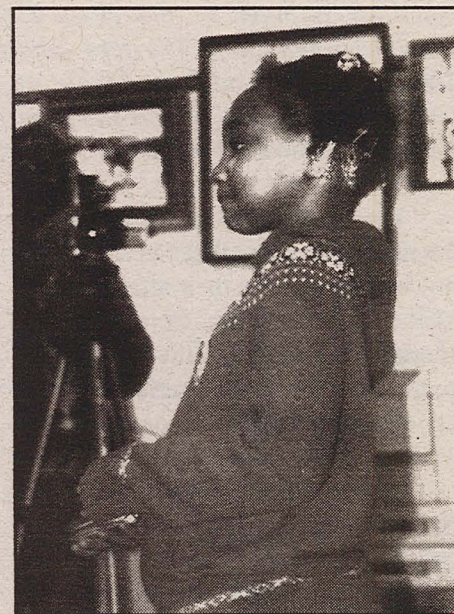
Marlene Krohn spoke about Mumia Abu-Jamal who lingers on death row in the state of Pennsylvania, while former BPP member Ronald Freeman spoke on behalf of Romaine "Chip" Fitzgerald and Eddie Conway, both incarcerated as BPP members back in 1969 and 1970 respectively, for murder crimes that neither committed, yet they are still in prison today.

After the presentations, people had more time to greet old friends and make new acquaintances. Mike Wickliffe, a volunteer with *The Commemorator* since 1998, now 28 years old, said, "I admired and reflected on Anthony Jones's paintings of Black Panther history in the new CCBPP workspace and multi-purpose offices. The Program acknowledged the ongoing commitment of current volunteers with Certificates of Appreciation. I admired that, and hearing from Richard Aioka, a Japanese brother, who organized with Huey and Bobby during the early days, we learned again that the struggle is truly revolutionary and Intercommunal, as Huey Newton and Bobby Seale articulated back in the day.

"The celebration showed me how productive it could all be, and I think that as more people get involved with *The Commemorator*, they will see the same thing. The difficulties we all face are diminished when we make concerted efforts, no matter how small they might seem. Imagine trying to lift a heavy box by yourself, and then imagine 100 people helping you. It becomes nothing. In solidarity, organization and mobilization, All Power to the People."



Former BPP Minister of Culture Emory Douglas (right) was one of many who honored Ruth Villa (Jones) for her many contributions to the cause of revolutionary intercommunalism.



Ihklar Halliday, daughter of CCBPP volunteer Eseibio Halliday recited her poem, "What the Li'l Bobby Hutton Program means for me."

Melvin Dickson summed it up. "We are implementing revolutionary intercommunalism as defined by our beloved comrade, Dr. Huey P. Newton in the early 1970s. Newton said, that with transnational corporations in charge of the world, currently the world is in a state of reactionary intercommunalism, and that we will remain in that state until we, the people, inside this country, come to understand what it would take to build a solution, through Revolutionary intercommunalism, uniting the many to defeat the few. Please call *The Commemorator* at 510-652-7170."

All Power to the People

In Memoriam Richard Pryor

December 1, 1940 - December 10, 2006

"The power of the white world is threatened whenever a black man refuses to accept the white world's definitions."

- James Baldwin, 1962

by Nia Imara

Born December 1, 1940 in Peoria, Illinois and having grown up in poverty there, Pryor moved to Berkeley, California in 1969. Through his immersion in the counterculture, studying of Malcolm X, interaction with activists like Ishmael Reed and Huey P. Newton — becoming an avid supporter of the Black Panther Party — Pryor reevaluated and transformed his art. His career reached new heights in the Seventies, when he won Grammys for comedy albums like "That Nigger's Crazy" and "...Is it Something I Said."

December 10, 2005 marked the passing of this most brilliant social critic and revolutionary comic.

Since slavery, blacks have used humor as sustenance, as a means of preserving their dignity in the face of suffering, and as an act of rebellion against their oppressors. Richard Pryor upheld this vibrant tradition and greatly advanced it by ingeniously turning often coded acts of dissent into an all-out public assault on the powers that be.

Just the thought of one of his famous sketches would initiate in me a bout of stomach-clenching laughter — or, on the other hand, it might invite hostility in others who saw his performance as offensiveness and vulgarity. Yet this was precisely why Pryor was so cherished, especially by the black community: he was unapologetic. Through his humor, he told the story of disenfranchised peoples — often debilitated by racism and poverty — on their own terms. Through his characters, such as the beloved Mudbone, Pryor provided a rare voice to society's castaways — street hustlers, drug addicts, the uneducated, the poor. Bringing with it all of the color, language, beauty, aspirations, and vulnerabilities of these people, this voice was always truthful, it always set the context for their plight, and it was always woven with humanity and genuine love for them. Here lay Pryor's real innovation.

Dick Gregory, one of Pryor's mentors, said that "Comedians for generations will study him and be forever frustrated by the fact that they will never be him." It was not simply the unprecedented use in his comedy of racial epithets, four-letter words, and sex that made Pryor a blueprint for subsequent entertainers, regardless of race. Rather, he conveyed through this material the tragicomic impact that racism, sexism, and classism has had on both victim and perpetrator. The real danger in his acts lay not in the shocking language, but the use of that language to force questions upon authority. As Pryor himself said, "My comedy is not comedy as society has defined it."

Pryor's career was one of continuous evolution. He started out, naturally funny as he was, telling safe jokes in the style of his favorite comedian, Bill Cosby. Yet despite his growing success, he grew frustrated at the limitations of this approach to comedy. As he said in his autobiography, "There was a world of junkies and winos, pool hustlers and prostitutes, women and family screaming inside my head, trying to be heard." Indeed, what James Baldwin said of the writer, that it is his responsibility to "excavate the experience of the people who produced him," is true of other artists, as well. And this is precisely what Pryor set out to do when he forced a redirection in his career in the late Sixties.

Part of Pryor's appeal to audiences came from his ability to turn the mirror on himself in his routines. While Bill Cosby recently raised an outcry amongst many blacks at his public criticism of the poor and uneducated in our community, Pryor's routines making fun of these same people never provoked such a response. This is because his acts were never contemptuous; he did not blame the victims for their condition. Furthermore, he always opened his own life to just as severe an examination, whether in reference to

his drug addictions, his run-ins with the police, or his interracial marriages. In the harsh world of Hollywood tabloids and name-slandering, this was perhaps to Pryor's advantage — he always beat the carpers to the punch in drawing attention to his faults.

Richard Pryor transformed traditional methods of live stand-up comedy heretofore. Though he could deliver an incisive, straightforward joke, the innovation came in his performances of real-life characters interacting in real-life exchanges. In essence, he brought the narrative of stand-up comedy from the third-person to the first-person — arguably, a more empathetic point of view. In his first-person sketches he would take the viewpoint of blacks, whites, women, rich, poor — and then he pushed further with his hilarious personifications of animals, body parts, and inanimate objects.

Yet it must be stressed again that the larger importance of Pryor's impact was not in the form of his material, but in the content. He never ceased to point an unflinching finger at the dominant crises of American society. His live and onstage candor concerning race and class was brought to larger audiences in movies like *Blue Collar*, in which he portrayed a unionist in a Detroit auto factory, poignantly capturing how capitalism aims to keep people divided so as to better exploit us.

Pryor's public denouncing of the disproportionate number of blacks called to fight in the Vietnam War is as relevant today. He headlined an essay in a progressive magazine of the day, *The Realist*, saying, "Uncle Sam Wants You, Nigger."

Pryor consciously evolved his comedy further when he openly condemned the N-word after a trip to Kenya in 1979. He had been so moved by seeing black people — African people — running their own businesses and living with such dignity, that upon his return he announced he would never again use the derogatory term in his routines.

As with the other tragedies in his life, Pryor's 1986 diagnosis of multiple sclerosis was not immune to becoming joke material. Nor did he let the debilitating disease slow down his long activism for animal rights. As the title of the 2003 documentary on his impact in the entertainment industry said, "I Ain't Dead, #S@&!!"

In 1998, the Kennedy Center awarded Pryor with its inaugural Mark Twain Prize for humor. This honor mirrored what nearly every successful living comedian has acknowledged as his status as a pioneer who opened the door for subsequent performers to more freely express the truth. Furthermore, this prize merely echoed the appreciation of millions of ordinary people whom Pryor enabled to have release through laughter. As legendary composer Quincy Jones said, "I've always thought that a big laugh is a really loud noise from the soul saying, 'Ain't that the truth!'" Richard Pryor is the truth machine." This is what has kept, and will long continue to keep, so many of us genuinely laughing with him.

All Power to the People



Richard Pryor attends Huey Newton's 1974 book-signing party for "In Search of Common Ground" in Oakland, California

BPP Intercommunal News Service

IT'S ABOUT TIME sponsors a Black Panther Party 40th Anniversary

Friday, October 13, 2006 at Alice Arts Center, 1428 Alice Street, Oakland, California

Saturday, October 14, 2006 at Geoffreys Inner Circle,

downtown Oakland, on 14th Street, between Broadway and Franklin

Please make reservations now.

For further information, contact: Its About Time at P.O. Box 221100, Sacramento, CA 95822

Phone number: 916-457-3118 /www: itsabouttimebpp.com

Political Prisoner Updates

Mumia Abu-Jamal Honored in Paris, France

Ona Move! 2006 marks the 25th year of the incarceration of Black journalist, former Black Panther, father, and grandfather Mumia Abu-Jamal. Mumia remains on death row in Pennsylvania for a crime he did not commit, and the state of Pennsylvania continues to actively seek his legal lynching despite international support and evidence of his innocence.

In December 2005, the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit agreed to review two additional issues raised on federal habeas corpus and in a subsequent appeal. The Court is now considering a total of four issues, three of which could lead to a new trial for Mumia and his ultimate release. These three constitutional issues address Mumia's right to a fair trial, due process of law, and equal protection of the law under the Fifth, Sixth, and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution.

In addition to their constitutional significance, the three issues currently before the Third Circuit also have another factor in common: bias.

April 24, 2006 also marks the tenth anniversary of the Anti-Terrorism & Effective Death Penalty Act (AEDPA), which was signed into law on Mumia's birthday.

These issues shed light on the prosecutorial and judicial misconduct which occurred at Mumia's original trial in 1982 and during post-conviction proceedings, which were presided over by the original trial judge, Albert Sabo, who was overheard by a court stenographer to have said during a trial recess: "I'm going to help them fry the nigger." These issues relate to Prosecutor McGill's prejudicial jury summation that Mumia would have "appeal after appeal," the unconstitutional use of peremptory challenges to exclude Blacks from serving on Mumia's jury; and, the impact of Sabo's racism on Mumia's rights to due process during post-conviction proceedings where the defense offered evidence of coerced witnesses, questionable confessions, and faulty ballistics which was callously disregarded and illegally denied. The fourth issue before the Court is whether Mumia will get the benefit of a "Mills challenge" to his death sentence: that it is unconstitutional for jury instructions during sentencing to lead jurors to believe they cannot vote against the death penalty unless they all agree on the mitigating evidence which does not support a death sentence.

April 24, 2006 also marks the tenth anniversary of the Anti-Terrorism and

Effective Death Penalty Act (AEDPA), which was signed into law on Mumia's birthday. The AEDPA is significant for two reasons: (1) it dramatically limited federal habeas corpus by reducing the filing deadline for habeas claims and narrowing the issues which can be reviewed by the courts; and, (2) it amended Section 212(c) of the Immigration and Nationality Act increasing the likelihood of deportation for any immigrant with virtually any criminal conviction that constitutes a ground of deportation: any aggravated felony, any controlled substances offense, any firearm offense, or any two crimes involving moral turpitude with sentences exceeding one year.

Why is this important? The AEDPA was touted as legislation that would "improve the fair and timely review of state court judgments by the federal courts" and "control illegal immigration," but ten years later Congress is AGAIN reviewing BOTH federal habeas and immigration policies in an effort to further curtail basic human rights. Current pending federal legislation (S. 1088 & H.R. 3035) is looking to further "streamline" federal habeas corpus to make it even more difficult for the innocent/wrongly convicted to obtain relief in the courts at the same time H.R. 4437 and other legislative proposals seek to make it even easier to deport more people, take away more rights from immigrants facing deportation, and make it harder for immigrants to become citizens of the United States — a country started by settlers on indigenous land!

Mumia is ALL OF US, and we must continue to fight for peace and justice against racism, discrimination, war, and death! On April 29, 2006, there was an honoring ceremony outside of the city of Paris — whose city council voted Mumia an honorary citizen in 2001, shortly before Judge Yohn's federal habeas decision which is now pending before the Third Circuit — in the town of St. Denis, where they have constructed a thoroughfare leading into the largest arena in France: the Nelson Mandela Stadium. La Rue Mumia Abu-Jamal will serve as a constant reminder of the work of the PEOPLE on behalf of the voice of the voiceless.

Liberté pour Mumia!

Freedom now for our innocent freedom fighter on death row! Join our call for a simple demand for justice! Help us bring our brother home THIS 25th year!

Ona move!

International Concerned Family & Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal
icffmaj@aol.com 215-476-8812

Compton Councilperson supports release of Romaine (Chip) Fitzgerald

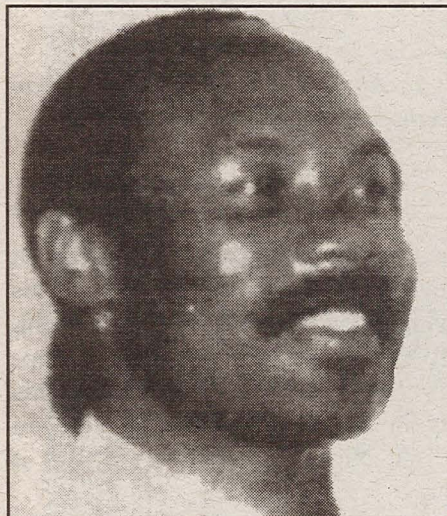


Photo from Black Panther newspaper archives

Romaine ("Chip") Fitzgerald, framed by FBI COINTELPRO.

Editor note: In 1969, Romaine "Chip" Fitzgerald was a former member of the Southern California Chapter of the Black Panther Party that was targeted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for its political activities. Fitzgerald, a dedicated cadre, has been locked up almost 38 years, just as many other BPP members had put their life on the line for the cause of their people's oppression. The state of California continues to violate the law, i.e., penal code 1170.2 (b) (See Letter to the Editor, page 8).

Today, Chip is the longest held Black Panther political prisoner in the United State prison system. He has had a stroke and major back surgery. He is

disabled. He still has a slight paralysis on his left side and walks with a cane.

Mel Mason, President of the Monterey Peninsula Branch of the NAACP, which advocates on Chip's behalf, said, "Chip had a stroke and and back surgery...This is absolutely political...The rule of law states that people sentenced to 'Life with Parole' must be given a release date. If he was anyone else, he'd have been out a long time ago. He should never have been incarcerated, and he meets the requirements for release."

Chip is from Compton, California. The following letter was written by Compton City Councilperson, Barbara Calhoun. She mailed it to State Board of Prison Terms (BPT), Chairperson, Margarita Perez.

Chip's next hearing before the Board may be in August, or may be the first of the next year. Please write to Ms. Perez and demand that the Board of Prison Terms recommend Chip's immediate release. You can call or write The Commemorator for further updates and how you can help overturn this unjust system that continues to persecute Chip and hundreds of other black and low-income men and women who can not afford to individually challenge the illegality of the state.

The Commemorator

1837 Alcatraz Ave, Berkeley, CA 94703
510-652-7170



City of Compton
OFFICE OF CITY COUNCIL

June 5, 2006

Ms. Margarita Perez
Chair Person
CA Board of Prison Terms
1515 K. Street, Ste. 600
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chair Person Perez:

This correspondence is in regard to a Compton, CA born resident, Romaine "Chip" Fitzgerald. In 1969, Mr. Fitzgerald, a member of the Southern CA Black Panther Party, was charged and convicted of murder (a crime he denies committing to this day) and received a sentence of death by the California State Supreme Court, which was automatically appealed. It was during this time in February of 1972 that the death penalty was considered unconstitutional. Therefore, Mr. Fitzgerald's original sentence of death was commuted to 7 years to life with the possibility of parole. When Mr. Fitzgerald's original sentence was overturned he had already served half the minimum and it was at this time that he became eligible for parole in 1976. Some 30 years later Mr. Fitzgerald sits in prison having been repeatedly denied parole in spite of his exceptional behavior during his incarceration.

Mr. Fitzgerald's prison records reflect that he has conducted himself as a model prisoner; there are no acts of criminal and/or violent behavior. Mr. Fitzgerald has been incarcerated for 36 years; this means he has spent more time locked up than he has free on the streets. In addition, since his incarceration, Mr. Fitzgerald suffered a stroke and has had major back surgery, which has left him partially paralyzed requiring him to walk with a cane for the rest of his life.

At this time we appeal to you to release Mr. Fitzgerald on parole. As Councilperson for the first District of the city of Compton, I assure you that Mr. Fitzgerald has a vast network in this city that will embrace, support, protect and guide him upon his release and for years thereafter. We shall assist in every way to provide this fine gentleman with employment, housing and health care. It is our intention to provide a support system that will assure his positive and smooth re-entry into society.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Barbara Calhoun
Council Person Barbara J. Calhoun



COMPTON CITY HALL
205 South Willowbrook Avenue Compton, California 90220

BARBARA J. CALHOUN
Councilwoman District 1

(310) 605-5534
Fax: (310) 761-1427

Letters to the Editor

Big bucks in prison labor

Editor's Note: The Commemorator has been reporting for years about the growing and lucrative California prison system. The Board of Prison Terms (BPT), is a non-elected and virtually unaccountable body.

For many California prisoners serving indeterminate sentences, the legal battle for due process of law has been incredibly deceptive, bureaucratic, politicized and unjust.

Recent studies have shown that the California inmate population has ballooned rapidly under Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's administration in spite of its promises of reform. In 2004, the statewide inmate population was 161,000, already a huge number. Schwarzenegger assured the public that by the middle of 2005, this would be reduced to 148,390. Instead, it has risen to 168,000 as of 2006 and the governor now admits that it will swell even further to 171,000 men and women by the end of the year. The crucial point is that at these levels, California's 33 prisons are at nearly double their capacity. Prison gyms are filled with beds; prisons have cells with triple bunks, with prison officials declaring "an imminent and substantial threat to the public safety."

A real and practical motivation for increased imprisonment lies in the fact that the United States prison system is becoming increasingly profitable and privatized.

Prison labor is a booming business. In fact, today, the business of prison labor has become a top growth industry in the country, particularly in California. Prisoners are an easily exploited group (trapped and garnering virtually no sympathy from the public) and the companies that are privileged enough to do the exploiting (undoubtedly thanks to their sponsored politicians) benefit from inmate levels remaining high.

In the following letter, Colvin McCright analyzes the mechanism that makes this possible. There's money to be made all around, except for the laboring prisoner, who is left with the short end of the stick, as well as his community, where living wage jobs have disappeared.

Dear Editor,

Since 1981 the California Governor's office and Legislature have used "short fall deficit laws" to justify building more than 20 maximum security prisons to relieve overcrowded prison conditions that the Governor and his appointed Board of Prison Terms (BPT) have atrociously manufactured by flat out failing to enforce the term fixing requirements of the 1976 Determinate Sentencing Law (DSL). On July 1, 1977, California's Indeterminate Sentencing Law (ISL) was repealed and replaced by the DSL. Under the new law, or Cal. Penal Code

(PC) 1170.2(b), the BPT is mandated to fix the release dates of all ISL prisoners by October 1, 1978, if their felony was committed prior to July 1, 1977, or within 120 days of reception if the felony was committed after July 1, 1977.

"Short Fall Deficit" statutes are established in Section 4400 et seq. of the Penal Code. Every year when it is time to balance the budget the Governor and members of the Legislature will inevitably hold a press conference to announce that the State has a short fall deficit and that they will have to make painful choices to either raise taxes (Democrats) or cut the budgets (Republicans) of existing social programs.

I am pretty sure that most taxpayers are not aware that a shortfall deficit is actually a debt or liability that the Governor and Legislature are legally authorized to create each year to pay for programs and business ventures the voters will not approve at election time.

In 1981, the voters approved the County Jail Expenditure Bond Act (CEBA). Bond acts were also approved in 1984, 1980 and 1988. However, the voters rejected the bond act of 1990. The so-called bond acts were supposed to raise money to create alternative programs to incarceration and make renovations to existing prisons to reduce overcrowding.

For the past 22 years, the Governor's office has headed a committee that allows three prison agencies to create more than a \$2 billion debt each year for prison construction. As chairman of the County Jail Capital Expenditure Committee, the Governor is authorized to allow county jails to create annual debts of up to \$280,000,000, the California Department of Corrections to create annual debts of up to \$500,000,000, and the County Correctional Facility and Youth Facility is authorized to create an annual debt of up to \$410,000,000.

The expense of these debts is added to the State budget each year under the guise of short fall deficits. One prerequisite for receiving an interest free loan that doesn't have to be paid back to the State is that a county must raise 25% of the cost of building a prison or youth detention center. But under the bond act of 1986, a not-so-wealthy county can appeal to the Legislature for a fee modification or waiver and get up to \$490,000,000 to build the prison anyway.

After the prison is built, the cost of operating it is incorporated into an annual prison budget that currently exceeds \$5 billion. Most of this money is spent on prison guard salaries and health benefits. More than 20 maximum-security prisons have been built with debt expenditure funds. To ensure

Continued on page 18

Kids Corner

Li'l Bobby

by Khyla Wilson

Li'l Bobby was a young man,
He stood for human rights.
Li'l Bobby loved his family and friends.

We wish Li'l Bobby was still here
so he can fight for me.

But, now I have to fight for him
and our rights for Black people.

Love,
Cancer K

Li'l Bobby Hutton

by Alon Haynesworth

On April 6, 1968, the Black Panthers were transporting food and supplies for a picnic in three cars. Li'l Bobby Hutton was trapped in a basement and was murdered by the police in Oakland. Some of the good things Li'l Bobby Hutton did was that he got a part time job at the service center and he died courageously and lived courageously. He was the youngest in the Black Panther Party and taught himself how to read and write. That's why our program is named after him.

Death of My Cousin

by Khyla Wilson

Death,
Death of my cousin,
Stay here with family.

Death,
Death of my cousin,
Stay with God.

Death,
Death of my cousin,
Why did you have to leave us very soon?

Death,
Death of my cousin,
We all miss you.

Death,
Death of my cousin
I miss you
Love,
Cancer K

Untitled

by Cyioune

Little Bobby Hutton
was very bright.
He taught himself
how to read and write.
He was a role model
4 you and me.

So let's educate our community!



Photo by Constance D. James

Youth from the Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign learn to use to operate modern PC's as part of literacy training.

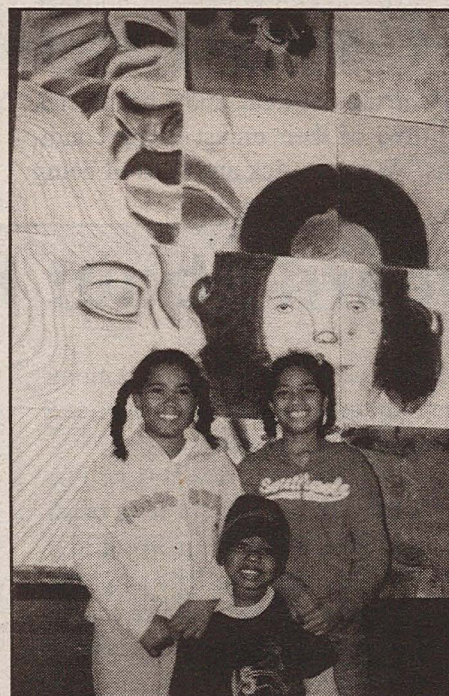


Photo by Constance D. James

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What We Stand For

East Oakland Community High School seeks to create change in our communities. A new small public school in East Oakland, we are in our second year of existence. We want to destroy the myth that the youth of Oakland only care about drugs, gangs and "going' dumb." Students at EOCHS participate in programs to glorify our minds and organize our communities in order to help all people realize that the world we live in is unjust and it does not need to be that way.

Students at EOCHS participate in many different Community Empowerment Programs throughout Oakland, from tutoring elementary school youth to addressing issues related to the prison industrial complex

with Critical Resistance to supporting the Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party and Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign.

Through our Community Empowerment Program all 10th grade youth at East Oakland Community High School are taking action to better themselves while giving back to their communities. We break away from the stereotypes of youth held by the so-called upper class, categorizing us by the way we look and where we come from instead of what we stand for. We stand for freedom, the empowerment of our communities, the re-education of society, and reshaping the minds of today's youth who will become tomorrow's leaders.

East Oakland Community High School A Voice of Leadership

Mental Threat

by Evarette Lavender

I've been analyzing our roots and culture. Specifically, black roots and culture. Can I say American? Naw, that doesn't feel right. I don't have ex-European pro-savage spirit. Can I say African? It fits me but not everybody who is an ex-slave considers himself African or Black. I have noticed that what is fed to the general public, and even to people of color, is that we're uncivilized; that we have no class; that we are criminals and the reason why America is corrupt. That is the dominant impression. We have come to be labeled as drug dealers, gang bangers, gangsters, people of destruction: the Black Plague. What makes it worse is some people of color make it true by doing the things mainstream society says we do and also by trying to be like white America.

I hate it when people say "the government." Who owns it? Who started it? Who has tried and is trying to put our people to extinction? Think about it, why do so many Black people hate dark skin so much and prefer the light color? Why do you hate how your hair grows? And why do you hate your nose? I was told that God, Allah, Jehovah made us out of His image but since we are told that this isn't what beauty is, we fight when someone says "you're too Black," "your hair is too nappy," or "your nose is too wide." Malcolm X said, "You can't hate the



Contributors (from left to right): Robert Mason, Evarette Lavender, (teacher) Trevor Gardner, Anthony Dykes, Leonard Jones

roots of a tree and not hate the tree. You can't hate Africa and not hate yourself." We were told negative things about Africa—that there are just jungles and savages. Nobody is civilized.

Now people are trying to say Africa is beautiful — and it is. If you see Black people here then it shouldn't take a scientist to figure that out. But we have all been colonized by the Europeans. From the Africans to the Latinos to the Asians, we have all been manipulated into thinking that we are the problem.

It is time to take back what is ours. We have waited too long for a leader. A leader does not win wars, the soldiers do. What we need is strong people who are not weak and who are sick and tired of their unjust living conditions! Who are sick and tired of being

making minimum wage and paying rent that is too high! Who are sick and tired of being blamed for the messed up situation we are in! Who are ready to make a resolution by fighting back with a revolution!

No, I'm not talking about everyone rallying up and protesting, that's not a revolution. That's a protest gathering. Then when the police come in their riot gear people are ready to pack up and leave. No, when the police come in their riot gear we must fight back when they throw the first blow. "By any means necessary," said Malcolm X.

We have to show we are serious. I'm talking so I better be sure I'm going to back it up. I come from Oakland, the home of the Black Panthers. Best believe their spirit runs through me.

No Matter Where I Go

By Leonard Jones

No matter where I go
every time somebody smiles
All I see is caps of silver and gold
because they don't want no one to
know that the real shine of their smile
is forever gone.

I see bodies get dropped
on the streets that hold
the front doors to my nieces and
nephews home.

Before the age of five
they are calling up their friends
on cellular phones —
Got my nephew on the line talking about
bi**es and hoes...

My niece on her line gossiping
talking about "girl, I love him
he just don't know."

This white man just don't know...

How many women in my home
have favorite TV shows and have
yet to know that their
favorite TV shows are the same ones
that influence three and four year olds to
call women hoes?

Watching MTV and BET late night
has done our lives everything but
right.

Like I said, this white man just don't
know...

How many of my brothers and sisters are
being thrown out of their homes because
they're trying to live a reality
of what he puts on our TV to be shown.

What he really don't
know is how many
revolutionaries could have an even
greater influence

on this place that I call home.

What would happen if you saw
Huey Newton

Eldridge Cleaver and
Malcolm X on TV in every video?
You wouldn't drive down the street
and see the cops

arresting our brothers and sisters
any more.

They wouldn't be shipping
themselves off to war.

This cannot happen any more.

Another thing I bet he don't know
is how my friend Davelle Tate was killed
on the way home one late night and
all he wanted to do was see his mom —
I know you don't think that's right.

The white man started this fight and
shipped us here across the Atlantic
at war before we knew it existed.

It's time for us to relive this life
give it back and
birth a new struggle.

Have you heard about HR 4437?

by Anthony Dykes
and Robert Mason

HR 4437 says that if you know an "undocumented immigrant/s" you are to turn them into the authorities. Also it says that if you help "undocumented immigrants" by employing them, giving them a place to live, or simply helping them in any way rather than turning them over to the authorities, you also will be committing a crime. HR 4437 does not just target Latinos, as the mainstream media tends to portray. It targets anyone that immigrates here from

any where in the world. Among other things, it also puts refugees and asylum seekers at risk.

If we don't act now this will be a reality because in thirty days or so it just may, or a similar piece of legislation, may pass through Congress. Now are you asking what can I do?

Well this month the Senator of California, Diane Feinstein, will give her vote on immigration legislation. What you do now is call the Senator at these numbers: (415) 393-0707 and (202) 224-5042 and let her know that you don't want this proposal to be passed.

Three teachers that teach at East Oakland Community High School in East Oakland (Wayne Yang, Cesar Cruz, and Jay Pugao) participated in a hunger strike against HR 4437 from Tuesday, March 21 to Monday, March 27 in front of the San Francisco Federal Building. On March 27 5,000 people marched on the S.F. Federal Building to participate in the action against HR 4437 and laws targeted against immigrant communities in the US. That is just in S.F. About 500,000 to 1 million people in L.A. marched and walked out of school.



In November, 1983, Coretta Scott King, who had worked for over a decade to have her husband birthday observed as a national holiday, oversees President Ronald Reagan sign the historic bill in the Rose Garden. Dr. King's sister, Christine Farris (center), Senator Robert Dole (left) and Senator Jack Kemp (third from left) look on.

From the funeral of her husband, we are left with an unforgettable image of the Great Lady widowed, comforting her young children. This image became one of lasting associations connected with the assassinations of leaders arising from the struggles of the people — including Malcolm X, Medgar Evers, and Fred Hampton.

Coretta Scott King

Continued from page 1

Alabama. Although her family had owned the farm since the Civil War, the Depression of the 1930s hit the area hard, and she and her two siblings all picked cotton to help bring money into the household.

When Coretta was old enough, she went to the one-room Crossroads School, a five-mile walk each day. When she got older, Lincoln High in Marion was the educational option, but that was a nine-mile hike each way. So her mother, Bernice M. Scott, hired a bus and drove all the local black students to and from school. Otherwise, the children would have had to stay in Marion all week, coming home only for weekends.

Coretta studied music and voice in high school and excelled at all of her studies to graduate at the top of her

class. She then went to Antioch College in Ohio. Antioch was a Quaker school founded in 1853 and students were to be admitted to the college "...without regard to colour, sex, or religious affiliations..." This was nicely radical for 1853, but not until the 1940's was Coretta's sister Edythe actually the first black full-time student to live on campus. Coretta followed her sister and once at Antioch, she majored in music and education. Part of her education curriculum included a requirement to do student-teaching in local schools. However, when it was time for Coretta to do this, the way was blocked because they didn't have any black teachers to supervise her. She protested, of course, but the school preferred to have her do her student-teaching at the Antioch Demonstration School, and not fight it out with the local public schools.

Coretta was sufficiently skilled and gifted in music to win a scholarship to the prestigious New England

Conservatory of Music in Boston. The scholarship only covered tuition, so Coretta rolled up her sleeves and went to work again. All of which helped prepare her for being married to King, a man who was married to the Movement.

After six months of his pursuit for her hand in marriage, they married in 1953, with his own renowned father presiding over the wedding ceremony. Being of strong mind and will, Coretta insisted and prevailed in getting them

to remove the phrase from the wedding vows that the wife was to obey her husband.

"She never complained. The attacks and misunderstandings seemed only to sharpen and polish her beautiful persona."

The Civil Rights movement was heating up. Like hundreds of thousands of families across the country in those years, the Kings were subjected to overt discrimination and threats of violence, police and FBI harassment. Their first child was born in 1955, just two weeks before the beginning of the Montgomery Bus Boycott and its attendant danger to the King family, whose home was bombed in 1956.

During the next decade, their family and the Movement grew, demanding more from her. She continued her involvement, staging fund-raising events, concerts, speeches, marching and demonstrating, and in 1962 attending the Disarmament Conferences in Geneva as a representative of Women's Strike for Peace.

Fight For Civil Rights Led To Economic and Human Rights

As Dr. King began to recognize that it was financial power and not merely white power that created the problems, he also began to see that the issue was not only race, but also it was that racialism was used to inflict broad

Continued on page 18

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Haiti

Continued from page 4

protests began. Emerging unofficial vote counts by international observers, Haitian officials, and journalists put former-President René Préval overwhelmingly in the lead. However, days later, the CEP tally put Préval at 48.7%, just below the 50% necessary for him to win and prevent a runoff election.

Préval said he had proof that he won 54% of the vote, and some of his supporters said that it was as high as 79%. He had been elected President in 1995 with at least 64% of the vote, and was the only popularly elected Haitian President to ever complete a full term. Jean-Bertrand Aristide, elected in 1990 and 2000, was twice forced into exile after US-backed coups. Both leaders are symbols of the people's continued resistance to occupation and monopoly capitalism through the World Bank and USAID. Now, a vote for Préval is also a vote for the return of Aristide.

People doubted the CEP's claim of an honest count for good reason. First, of course, there were the two years of political repression leading up to the election that began with the coup and Washington's kidnapping of Aristide. Since then, the IGH has systematically suppressed opposition from members and supporters of Lavalas — Aristide's political movement popular with poor Haitians. And indeed, nearly every other day subsequent to the February 7 elections seemed to bring new evidence of vote fraud.

A week after the elections, thousands of burnt ballots — mostly for Préval votes — were found in a dump near Cité Soleil, a Lavalas stronghold, according to Brian Concannon, director of the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti (IJDH). Hundreds of tally sheets representing some 190,000 votes and 9% of the total were not counted because, officials say, they were missing the correct codes or were destroyed. Over 140,000 more votes (7% of the total) were declared "null" and discarded. And another set of blank votes, 4.6% altogether, were thrown out.

The 85,290 blank votes, which came disproportionately from polling offices in poor neighborhoods, were included in the tabulation of total valid votes. This procedure is a part of Haiti's election law, however, these votes were all counted against Préval. He would not have needed a large fraction of these votes to increase his official count by the 1.3% necessary to prevent a second round of elections. In any case, his nearest opponents, Leslie Manigat and Charles Henri Baker — with less than 12 and 6% of the vote, respectively — had no chance of winning a second round.

In an amazing mobilization five days after the election, poor Haitians gathered in protest at the high scale Hotel Montana, where the CEP was counting votes. They were met by riot police and UN troops but they persisted, demanding that their votes be respected. The Montana is Haiti's most opulent resort, where all the celebrities, foreign diplomats, and Western journalists stay — and in which the only Haitians allowed are staff. Though the hotel employers feared for the safety of guests and their property, not a single item was broken or stolen by the peaceful protesters. Before dispersing the protesters thumbed their noses at the classist Haitian elite, by jumping into the hotel's pool!

Ultimately, as Concannon and other numerous sources reported, instead of carefully recounting the ballots in public, the CEP decided to forego the election law requiring that blank ballots be counted in the total, and distributed the blanks in proportion to each candidates' existing percentage.

An Uncertain Victory

After all the pains they took trying to ensure that a candidate backed by the poor majority did not win, why did the IGH come to this seemingly reasonable solution? Concannon, who works closely with the Haiti Action Committee (HAC), friendly to Lavalas, said, "Préval's opponents know that a regime that can be negotiated into power can be negotiated out of power. The Haitian elite and their Western supporters have already stated the position that Préval is illegitimate because the deal changed the rules of the game in the middle of the contest. In the not-too-distant future, the election's illegitimacy will be accepted as 'fact' in the elite Haitian and international press, at the UN, and the international financial institutions. The 'fact' will justify withholding money for schools and hospitals, and sending money to political parties with no electoral support."

Thus, the people's election of President Préval is an uncertain and tainted victory, since the elite will try to create in it a platform from which to mount their next attacks.

Since the election, Préval has moved to build alliances with the most progressive forces in the Caribbean. He has entered Haiti into Petrocaribe, a Venezuelan initiative for supplying hydrocarbons to nations in the region under advantageous economic terms. He also invited a Cuban delegation to his presidential inauguration ceremony and they attended. Such alliances are essential if the struggle of the Haitian people is to be successful.

Equally crucial right now is the protection of President Préval in the lead-up

Continued on page 13

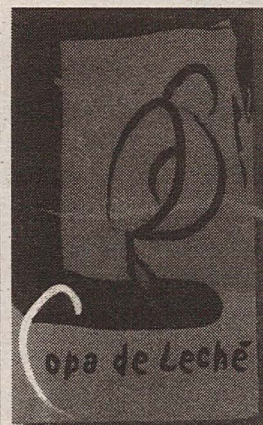
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G.A.ME, Inc. is a grassroots artist campaign founded in 2001 by artists Erykah Badu, Mos Def, Talib Kweli and Dead Prez.

G.A.ME is an international non-profit that aims to provide health care, development and unionization to hip-hop and all artists with the goal of redirecting hip-hop resources back into the Black and Latino communities.

Artists on labels currently make an average \$25,000 per year and receive few health benefits. G.A.ME, Inc. and the International Artists Union (IAU) will be campaigning for a law to allow artists to unionize and bargain as a group with labels and music groups.

G.A.ME supports positive and influential Hip-Hop artists and put out a CD compilation titled *Get in the G.A.ME* featuring artists such as Dead Prez and Immortal Technique. G.A.ME spoke at the National Hip-Hop Political Convention '04 on health disparities.

G.A.ME, Inc also was featured in *Russell Simmons' One World, XXI, the Source* and *Village Voice*. G.A.ME representatives have been interviewed on Power 105.1 FM, Hot97 and WBAI 99.5FM in New York City.

G.A.ME HealthCare Network

Since 2004, G.A.ME has offered free medical, dental, and free to low-cost prescription for G.A.ME members. HealthCare services address diseases affecting the community such as HIV/AIDS and asthma with campaigns in the U.S. and Nigeria. G.A.ME also plans quarterly health screenings and forums on health education.

The R.E.B.E.L Program (Rallying Educating & Building Effective Leadership)

The R.E.B.E.L. programs offers youth leadership training for participants ages 14 to 25 and actively seeks to prevent youth incarceration. Alternative to Incarceration (ATI) under R.E.B.E.L provides leadership training, employment assistance, academic help, and passes to community events.

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Haiti

Continued from page 12

to the second round of parliamentary elections, originally set for March 29. As expected, the CEP has announced delays, citing the need to finish processing complaints from the first round of general elections. In actuality, HAC's Pierre Labossiere says, the IGH is stalling so that they can manipulate circumstances to their favor — that is, so they can prevent Préval supporters from winning a majority in Parliament. If this happens, Préval will not have the legal support he needs to pass the people's reforms, and the elite will be able to serve their interests in a manner seen as legitimate by the international community.

Since winning the election, Préval has announced his support for Aristide's return from exile in South Africa.

The evidence for this is history. During his first term Préval did not have a majority in Parliament, and in 1996 he was pressured to privatize three of Haiti's nine state-owned industries. When Préval refused to acquiesce further, Parliament stopped passing his programs, and international financial institutions put a halt to low-interest loans to Haiti.

If the Haitian elite meets its goal of packing Parliament with opponents of Préval and Aristide, they will use as leverage the withholding of funds for schools, hospitals, infrastructure, and employment.

When asked how the people would react should this occur — what direction the movement would take — Labossiere emphasized, "The Haitian people are engaged in a continuous, 500-year-old resistance." They understand the historical nature of their struggle; they connect the past to the present; and it is clear that they must continue on this path despite the inevitable obstacles.

Solidarity With Haitian Struggle

There is a reigning mentality in the West that voting every two years is the end-all-and-be-all duty of each citizen. In the U.S., choosing candidates from one of two political parties that are identical in their servitude to monopoly capitalism — and not participating in an organization or movement for justice — is touted as the essence of the democratic process. But as musician Francisco Herrera sings: "If you want to know what it means to struggle for democracy — if you want to know what it means to struggle — look at Haiti."

On February 25, Herrera and musicians from the Freedom Song Network opened a program sponsored by the Haiti Action Committee featuring Duclos Benissoit, president of the Federation of Public Transport Workers of Haiti (FTPH). The event, held in the Bay Area, California, marked the two-year anniversary of the U.S.'s kidnapping of Aristide and was a demonstration that the world stands in solidarity with the Haitian struggle.

Organized labor (unions), therefore, can begin to cut off the source of

capitalism's lifeblood — profit and the expansion of markets. The history of capitalist powers lashing out against organized labor, within their own borders and without, proves how devastating this form of resistance is to them. It explains why they have always tried to redirect people's opposition into the safe channels of voting. And when this is not successful, they come down with sheer force, as in Haiti.

The remarkable determination Haitians showed on election day was a gift to the world because it disrupted the plans of those who seek to exploit humanity. For those of us watching from imperialist nations, where labor movements have been crushed and destroyed by the ruling class with repressive laws and use of mass media hue and cry, even Préval's tenuous victory in Haiti was especially inspirational and seemingly improbable. But as Duclos Benissoit pointed out, Haitians' determination did not come out of thin air; it came out of their historical, daily practice of struggle.

The history of the Haitian labor movement is long and rich. In the midst of the US's longest occupation of the island, from 1915 to 1934, the Haitian labor movement was defiant. But then and now, Benissoit said, there have been two types of unions in Haiti: those on the side of the people's struggle, and those on the side of imperialists. Then and now, the US government has worked through its own co-opted labor federations, like the AFL-CIO, to finance unions of the second type. Unions such as Batay Ouvriye, which has received millions of dollars from the AFL-CIO, actively advocated the overthrow of Aristide's government.

It is well documented that the European Union has given millions of dollars to Group 184, the self-titled "civil society" group that planned the coup of 2004. The elite Group 184, which has conservative unionists as members, is known to have orchestrated many of the terror campaigns in poor neighborhoods leading up to the elections.

Imperialism recognizes that unions which truly serve the people threaten its interests. So it co-opts, infiltrates, and props up false unions to set the people back. For instance, on January 9, the ultra-right Haitian

Chamber of Commerce called a national strike in a thinly disguised attempt to get MINUSTAH to crack-down on residents of Cité Soleil, a Lavalas stronghold. This was another attempt by Group 184 leaders Andy Apaid and Charles Henri Baker, a sweatshop owner, to create a pretext to de-legitimize Lavalas.

Part of Aristide and Préval's threat to capitalist interests has been their collaborative work with unions. During his first term in office, Préval took up where Aristide left off by bringing entourages of union representatives with him when he traveled. When visiting places like China and Cuba, the presidents would invite union reps so that they could learn and observe together.

Benissoit said that FTPH workers are proud of their accomplishments, such as providing 10,000 jobs for the poor. They are especially proud of having provided employment for the youth during the summer months. They learn skills, make money for school supplies, and a new generation that will advance the labor movement is educated in the process. For it is the youth, Benissoit said, that are the vanguard of the movement toward Haitian liberation.

Also at the forefront, since the very founding of Haiti, are women. As part of its strategy to keep people weak and divided and, thus, more easily exploitable, imperialism relegates women to inferior positions. It was Aristide's Lavalas movement that created the Ministry of Women's Affairs to specifically address the liberation of women. In further testament to the progressiveness of Haitian society, the original Women's Ministry office stood on the former headquarters of the military, which Aristide dissolved in 1995. Haiti and Costa Rica are the only countries in the world without a military.

Where Haiti is going from here

Benissoit said that Herrera's lyrics were especially true as concerns Haiti's political prisoners. Part of the IGH's campaign to clear a space for its own handpicked government has been to target political leaders. The Haitian elite has orchestrated the assassinations, torture, and imprisonment of

popular leaders, especially from Lavalas. Since the last publication of *The Commemorator*, Father Gerard Jean-Juste, a popular grassroots activist, was temporarily released after six months in prison. He is now being treated for leukemia in Florida.

Political leaders like Jean-Juste are targeted because they represent the people's resistance and because they are effective organizers who help push forward the movement toward liberation. The elite correctly feared that Jean-Juste, who serves people in the slums of Haiti, would figure prominently and perhaps win the presidential election.

Though Jean-Juste's release was a victory, there are still hundreds of political prisoners being held in Haiti's prisons. Working for their freedom will continue to be a focal point in Haiti's struggle.

Since winning the election, Préval has announced his support for Aristide's return from exile in South Africa. Aristide's safe return, and that of all Haitian exiles — including labor leaders like Duclos Benissoit — is another inflexible demand of Haitians.

Indeed, everyone who has been at ground zero of the grassroots work in Haiti has remarked on the people's resilient, dignified spirit in the face of so much suffering. Benissoit said, "The spirit of resistance is still very alive. Why? Because of solidarity."

In a message to his international supporters Father Jean-Juste said, "You see, the people are not desperate. Despite the fact that they have killed so many of us — handicapped so many of us — we keep the pressure on and on." He added, "We as people must be clever and tactical all the time."

With these elements supporting their struggle — history, solidarity, and vigilance — the Haitian people will stop at nothing. The ultimate success of their efforts however, will depend in large part on the outcome of the struggles in the advanced industrial nations, where the powers that lead the economic and political oppression are based, and have left Haiti bearing the burden of the deepest poverty in the western hemisphere. The final outcome of their struggle depends on the success of ours here.

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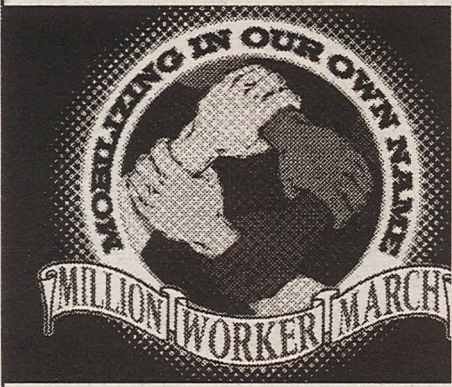
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ILWU Local 10 Mobilized Oakland Community for Dellums



International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10 organized a "get out the vote" campaign that helped Ron Dellums win the Oakland Mayor's office in last June's election. Dellums continues to acknowledge his proud history identifying with labor causes. ILWU Local 10 has historically fought for the needs of West Oakland resident and will continue to do so. Many Local 10 members load and unload the cargo at the Port of Oakland, in West Oakland, which has one of the highest unemployment rates in the Bay Area. In 1999 ILWU Local 10 initiated a special lottery for residents of West Oakland and the Fruitvale area in East Oakland to insure representation from those respective communities for Longshore entrance level jobs."

de Fremery Park

On Sunday, May 20, the ILWU sponsored a well attended rally, where over 250 people largely from West Oakland attended with free Soul-Food-for-Dellums at de Fremery Park. ILWU, Local 10 newly elected Secretary Treasurer, Farless Daily welcomed the gathering. (Brother Daily is a second-generation longshoreman serving his first term in office). This event was supported and endorsed by a wide-range of local organizations and individuals, including The Northern California District Council, David Hilliard, Local 10 member and former Black Panther Chief-of-Staff, representing the Huey P. Newton Foundation.

On June 19, 2006, at the downtown Oakland Marriott, Dellums declared victory amidst cheers from over 300 people assembled for the victory speech, and stated, "We can solve the problems of Oakland. We

can be a great city" and responded to questions from the press, about the current conditions in Oakland. Dellums stated that there was no easy solution, but that he plans to start by bringing all segments of the people to the table to determine the best direction for the city. He stated that "economics should not drive the people out of their community." He then responded to the questions on the current immigration issue, Dellums stated, "Immigrants are human beings. They are real people. 'English-only' is very defeating and limiting."

Dellums, who grew up in West Oakland, spent a great portion of his youth at de Fremery Recreation Center at 16th and Adeline. At a May 20 campaign rally there, he reminded the crowd that thousands of Oakland residents had signed a petition urging him to run but that he doesn't have an "S" for Superman on his chest and wants the community to get involved in the governing process by building a movement in Oakland.

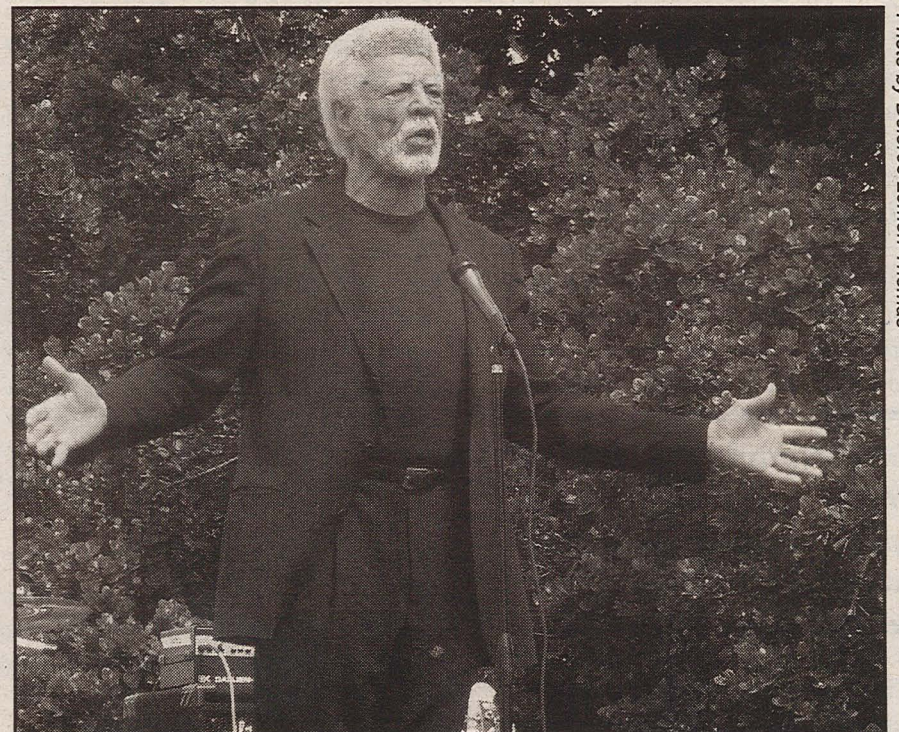
Dellums born to a labor family

Ron Dellums is no stranger to organizing successful movements against great odds. His father retired as a longshoreman, a member of ILWU Local 10. His uncle was the legendary labor and community activist, C.L. Dellums. The Oakland Amtrak train depot was named for him.

"Wherever I went as a youngster, people, when they'd hear my last name, would say, 'Is C.L. Dellums your father?' 'My father is Verney Dellums, but C.L. is my uncle,'" he once explained.

C.L. Dellums was one of the founding members of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, founded in 1925. "Fight or be slaves" were the words of C.L. Dellums when the BSCP was organized. It remained a credo of his the rest of his life.

In 1941, A. Phillip Randolph, president of BSCP, and C.L. Dellums organized a March on Washington Movement to protest discrimination by the U.S. government in the hiring of Blacks. A. Phillip Randolph called off the march to bring 100,000 Blacks to Washington, D.C., after President Roosevelt signed Executive Order



Dellums speaks at Unity-in-the-Community rally at de Fremery Park in West Oakland, sponsored by ILWU Local 10

8802, which barred discrimination in employment in the defense industries.

In 1946, C.L. Dellums became a major figure in Oakland's African-American community, heading up the NAACP and bringing its support to the 1946 Oakland General Strike. In 1968, C.L. Dellums replaced Randolph as president of BSCP.

Ron Dellums and the ILWU

In the 1980s, the ILWU, most notably Local 10 members in San Francisco, refused to handle South African cargo to oppose the racist, apartheid system of that country. During that time, the corporate media refused to cover the anti-apartheid actions of the ILWU. Congressman Dellums extended the use of his staff to prepare press releases and briefings regarding the boycott of South African cargo by the ILWU.

Members of Local 10's rank and file, such as Brother Leo Robinson, retired, and Larry Wright received congressional recognition of ILWU's contributions in the struggle against apartheid. In 1972, Congressman Dellums introduced the first legislation for sanctions against apartheid. He played a critical role in the ultimate passage of the legislation and in ending the apartheid regime.

In 1989, Dellums was responsible for bringing Nelson Mandela to Oakland, where he addressed thousands of people at the Oakland Coliseum during his Bay Area visit. He personally thanked and acknowledged Congressman Dellums for his efforts in Congress and the ILWU for its efforts of solidarity to bring an end to the system of apartheid.

'Unity in the Community'

ILWU Local 10 Secretary-Treasurer Farless Dailey welcomed everyone to the May 20 "Unity in the Community" rally. Other speakers included Amaha Kasa, executive director of the East Bay Alliance for a

Sustainable Economy, or EBASE; Judy Goff, executive secretary-treasurer emerita, Central Labor Council of Alameda; Wilson Riles Jr., Sister Jumokey Hodge and Emani of Parent Leadership Engagement Academy; Antonio Christian, president of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists; Leo Handy Jr., political organizer for the A. Phillip Randolph Institute; and Clarence Thomas, chairman of the ILWU East Bay Legislative Committee and coordinator of the day's event. Other elected officials and dignitaries present included Gay Cobb.

"We want change in Oakland, which means a progressive movement must be built in order to make it happen. We know the Mayor cannot do it alone. The Mayor must have the political and community support needed to make change. The Mayor must also be held accountable to the people to move the city forward. This means that we cannot allow only the interests of the powerful and privileged to dictate to the Mayor."

The interfaith community was represented by Mt. Zion Kingdom's King Dr. Eddie C. Welbon II, successor to the late King Louis H. Narcesse of the Mount Zion Spiritual Temple Inc., a co-sponsor of the event. Minister Keith Muhammad of the Nation of Islam, Oakland, brought several members of the Nation.

The Coalition of Black Trade Unionists registered voters. Jack Kurzweil of Voting Rights for All spoke. He explained that California

Continued on next page



ILWU Local 10 Drill Team at Oakland's de Fremery Park to welcome Oakland mayoral candidate and former U.S. Congressman, Ron Dellums, who grew up in West Oakland. His father was a member of ILWU Local 10.

ILWU Committed to Progressive Agenda for Oakland

Mayor-Elect Dellums: "A Vehicle for Change"

When mayor-elect Dellums throughout his campaign referred to his candidacy as a vehicle for the residents of Oakland to build a movement for change, that resonated with our membership. No matter how progressive an elected official may be, without a base, and an informed and active constituency, a progressive agenda cannot be achieved. The people must support and above all hold all elected officials accountable. Ultimately, it is the people that make change. Mayor-elect Dellums understands that because 8000 people who signed a petition calling for him to run for mayor, changed the political direction of the city of Oakland.

ILWU BUILDER OF LABOR COMMUNITY COALITIONS REGARDING THE PORT

ILWU Locals 10, 34 75 & 91, make up the largest and most powerful segments of union workers in the Maritime Division of the Port of Oakland. It is responsible for the movement and tracking of all cargo at the Marine terminals. Nothing moves on the waterfront without the ILWU.

The Port of Oakland is the fourth busiest container port in the U.S. behind Long Beach, Los Angeles and Newark. It is not only the economic engine for the city of Oakland, but the entire region of Northern California where it generates jobs for the regional economy as well as the state.

DREDGING

The ILWU has played an important role in deepening the inner Harbor channel to accommodate large container vessels. Dredging is critical in order for the port to remain competitive with others on the West Coast.



Photo by Delores Lemon-Thomas

Ron Dellums at victory-press conference at Merriott hotel, downtown Oakland.

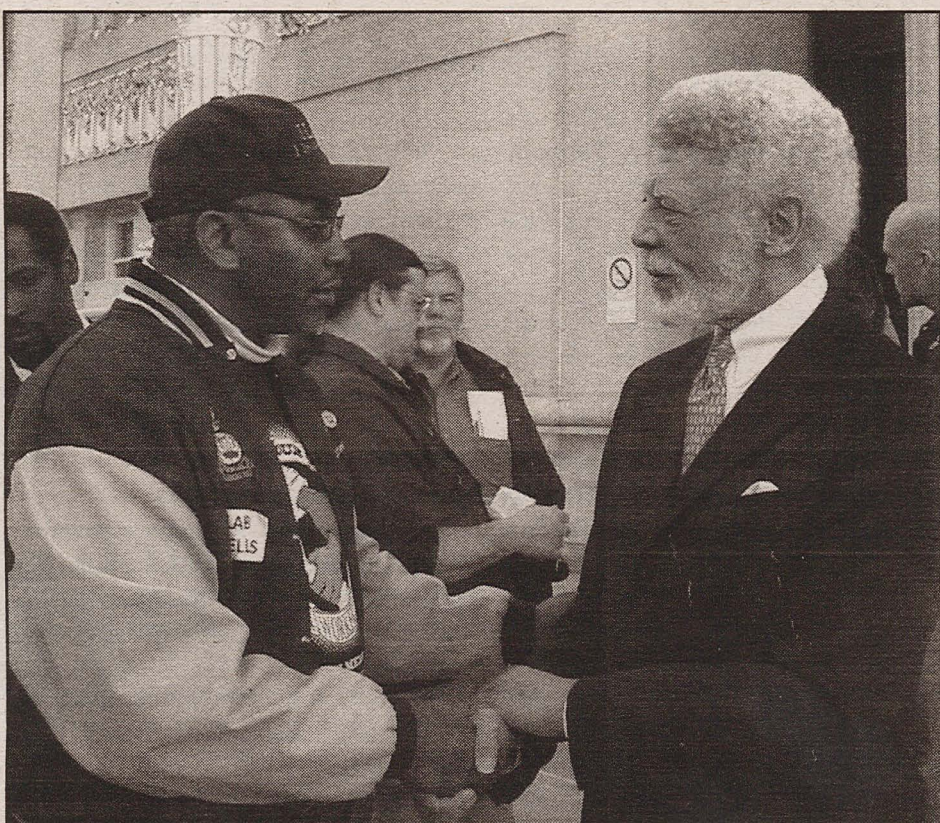


Photo by Delores Lemon-Thomas

At the campaign kick-off in downtown Oakland, Clarence Thomas, a member of the Executive Committee of the Central Labor Council, greets the former East Bay Congressman and Oakland's Mayoral candidate.

VISION 2000

Vision 2000 is a maritime development program for capital improvements, critical to keeping Oakland's future as a competitive port.

A key component of that project was THE JOINT INTERMODAL TERMINAL allowing containers to be moved inland by rail. ILWU worked with grass roots organizations, unions and environmental groups to ensure that all of the stake holders had input into the approval of the project.

COALITION FOR AN ACCOUNTABLE PORT (CAP)

Coalition for an Accountable Port (CAP) was a coalition of labor, community and interfaith organizations that was organized to make the Port of Oakland more accountable and responsible to the community regarding jobs, prevailing wages and the environment during the expansion of the airport and seaport. We were able to secure a Project Labor Agreement for the building trades ensuring that all labor used for the port expansion would be done by union labor. Also, included was a social justice program to ensure that residents of the city

would be included for the apprenticeship training program and hired for the port expansion.

LONGSHORE CASUAL JOBS

In April of 1999, five thousand people stood in line for hours in the port to apply for longshore Casual entry-level positions.

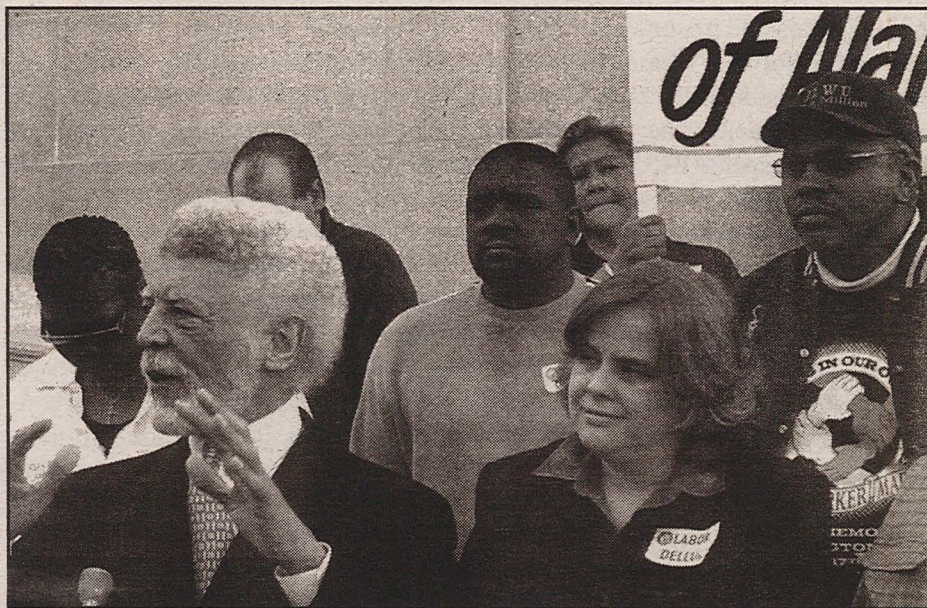


Photo by Delores Lemon-Thomas

Ron Dellums, the next mayor of Oakland meets with members of the Labor Council of Alameda during his kick-off election in March.

The membership of Local 10, initiated a program in conjunction with our employer The Pacific Maritime Association, the port of Oakland and city council members Nancy Nadel and Ignacio de Le Fuente to establish a special hiring lottery for residents of West Oakland and Fruitvale areas. Those communities were selected because of their proximity to the maritime port, unemployment issues and the impact of the port on the environment in those communities. Ten percent of all casual hiring from 1999 thru the present will include West Oakland and Fruitvale residents.

ILWU REPRESENTATION ON PORT COMMISSIONS ON THE WEST COAST

The Board of Port commissioners govern the port and oversee all the administration of the port. The Oakland port has never had a member of the ILWU on its commission although ILWU members have served on port commissions in the following cities on the West Coast: Los Angeles harbor Commission, San Francisco's, Portland, Seattle, and Tacoma.

Note: The ILWU became the first union on the West Coast to invest in affordable housing for low-income workers when it built the St. Francis Square cooperative housing project in San Francisco with ILWU and the Pacific Maritime Association pension funds.

ILWU Mobilized

Continued from last page

residents who have been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor could vote, so long as they're not in prison or on parole. The rule is, "In California, on probation? Off parole? You can vote."

Unity Statement

The following statement was signed by those who attended the event:

"We, the undersigned participants of the 'Unity in the Community' event

at de Fremery Park on Saturday, May 20, 2006, are committed to forming strong coalitions in the community in order to build unity and a progressive agenda so that working class residents of Oakland can chart a new direction for the city.

"We want change in Oakland, which means a progressive movement must be built in order to make it happen. We know the Mayor cannot do it alone. The Mayor must have the political and community support needed to make change. The Mayor must also be held accountable to the people to move the city forward. This means that we cannot allow only the interests of the

powerful and privileged to dictate to the Mayor.

"We pledge to build the political infrastructure that represents the will of the people in the community who have been left out of the governing process. We want proportional representation. We want progressive leadership for the city of Oakland.

"Ron Dellums' candidacy is the vehicle by which we can implement a more inclusive agenda."

Conclusion

Ron Dellums' candidacy provides the working class and others with the chance to secure power and influence

in Oakland, a city that has become more gentrified during Mayor Jerry Brown's tenure in office. This is a chance for coalitions representing people of color and progressives to build a movement in Oakland to put forward an agenda that is in the interest of the working class, the oppressed and the youth. Dellums' candidacy can be used by working people as a vehicle and catalyst for change.

Clarence Thomas is chair of the ILWU East Bay Joint Legislature Committee and a member of ILWU Local 10. He can be reached at thomas-clarence@sbcglobal.net.

Huey's corner

Continued from page 5

and the Huey P. Newton Campaign Account," another was issued to W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., in New York for all books and records relating to the transcribed conversation between Newton and Harvard professor Erik H. Erikson, which conversation was published as a book entitled *In Search of Common Ground*; a third was served on Playboy Enterprises, Inc., in Chicago, Illinois demanding "all books and records pertaining to Huey P. Newton interview conducted by Mr. Lee Lockwood ... [including] the transcript of the interview in its whole."¹⁴⁰

The tactic of serving third parties with summonses instead of the BPP directly made it more difficult for the Party to assert any right to privacy of the records. Indeed, there was no legal obligation on those served with summonses even to notify the Party; it learned of them either fortuitously or because those served communicated voluntarily with the Party. In any event, in 1974, the BPP promptly challenged this practice of IRS in Federal District Court.¹⁴¹ Though the lawsuit was ultimately dismissed without prejudice, only to be refiled in 1976 in Washington, D.C., as part of the Party's omnibus civil rights lawsuit against numerous federal agencies, it had the immediate effect of deterring IRS from serving additional summonses on third parties possessing information about the party.¹⁴²

Change history

Continued from page 2

to increase police forces in inner cities and build jails and prisons. For example in California, where there are already 33 prisons filled to twice their designated capacity, the governor is proposing to spend \$13.1 billion to build 83,000 new cells, some in prisons and some in county jails, over the next decade.

The Cost

The gap between the rich and the poor continues to widen as the U.S. leads the world in creating new millionaires. As of 2003 the top 1% of households owned 57.5% of the corporate wealth, up 5.4% from the year before. The top group's share of corporate wealth has grown by half since 1991, when it was 38.7%.

Meanwhile, very little attention is given to the unprecedented \$9 trillion federal debt the government has taken on in order to funnel trillions in no-bid contracts, war profiteering and tax breaks for the wealthiest.

In California, for every additional dollar earned by the bottom 90% of the population between 1990 and 2002, those in the top 1% earned an additional \$18,000, up from \$162 in 1970.

These statistics reflect government economic policies that are wreaking havoc on black and other poor communities.

To resist and change these policies we need organization that is engaged in those policy fights, rooted inside those neighborhoods that are negatively affected, starting with living wage

In addition to the serving of summonses on third parties, IRS also audited Party leaders and contributors. Huey Newton, for example, received formal notice of a tax deficiency assessment by IRS in the Alameda County jail within one week of his return to the United States from Cuba in July 1977.¹⁴³ In fact, while Newton was temporarily incarcerated by Immigration authorities in Toronto, Canada, en route from exile in Cuba, IRS considered obtaining a Canadian address for pursuit of a civil assessment action.¹⁴⁴

Discovery in the Party's federal lawsuit shows that when police and the Alameda district attorney searched Newton's residence after he had voluntarily turned himself into the police in connection with assault charges in 1974, the district attorney telephoned IRS agents who came to Newton's home and examined his personal papers and files in the hope of finding some evidence of a tax violation.¹⁴⁵ No less than four IRS agents spent six hours in Newton's apartment with microfilm equipment rummaging through his personal files searching for evidence of any crime for which he might be charged. The agents were so intent on obtaining a conviction against Newton on any grounds that they were careful to rationalize their search in internal memoranda in the event there were subsequent legal challenges to the admissibility of whatever evidence they might use for prosecution:

jobs for everyone who's able to work. We need policies that place the needs of working people ahead of the interests of monopoly capitalism.

Literacy is at an all-time low. According to a CBS release in December 2004, three thousand children nationwide drop out of high school daily. For those that do graduate from high school, 64% can't read. In the inner cities, more than half of all black men do not finish high school. As college tuition skyrockets, higher education is unaffordable for most. Only 11% of students at the nation's top universities are from low-income families. The average student graduates from college with \$26,000 in debt.

Oakland's education system is no exception to this trend, 68 % of the 50,400 public school students are poor enough to qualify for the federal lunch program. With a population of 400,000, today, over 85,000 adults are functionally illiterate. This was before the state of California took control of the Oakland Public School three years ago and fired hundreds of teachers and closed dozen of schools and libraries.

The Legacy of BPP

When the Black Panther Party emerged during the volatile civil rights era, it developed wide popular support and sympathy from many youth, especially Black ghetto youth where many looked to crime as an escape from poverty, similar to today, but not in today's large proportions. Then there were the white counter-culture youth, as well as youth from the major college campuses sympathizing and sup-

*It was my understanding that, if while executing a legal search, evidence of another crime is discovered, it would be permissible to seize it. (Note: Normally I would have copied such discovered evidence, but inasmuch as we were here and had been instructed by the police they did not want it copied, we were obliged not to).*¹⁴⁶

Ultimately, after expending tens of thousands of taxpayers' dollars to investigate the Party, its leaders and contributors, the agency concluded there was no evidence warranting criminal charges and the proposed civil assessment against Newton for past tax years was settled in 1979.

ENDNOTES

¹³¹ E.g., U.S. Congress. House. *Black Panther Party, Part I. Hearings before the Committee on Internal Security*, 91st Cong., 2d sess., March 4-10, 1970.

¹³² See, e.g., Complaint, par. 3, *Black Panther Party v. Alexander*, No. C-74-1247.

¹³³ Memorandum from IRS Assistant Commissioner D. W. Bacon to Chief Counsel and other officers, re "Activist Organizations Committee," July 18, 1969.

¹³⁴ Memorandum for File by D. O. Virdin, IRS, re "Activist Organizations Committee," July 24, 1969, p.1.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹³⁶ Memorandum from D. W. Bacon, Assistant IRS Commissioner, National Office, to All Regional

Commissioners, requesting information on "Activist Organizations," March 25, 1968.

¹³⁷ Memorandum from Paul H. Wright (IRS) to Leon Green, "Briefing Paper: Activist Organizations Committee," August 20, 1969.

¹³⁸ Memorandum for File by D. O. Virdin, IRS, re "Activist Organizations Project," July 29, 1969.

¹³⁹ Unsigned memorandum of understanding of meeting attended by IRS officials: Messrs. Willsey, Portney, Snyder, and Wright, Washington, D.C., August 15, 1973.

¹⁴⁰ Exhibits Nos. L, M, and O to original Complaint, *Black Panther Party v. Alexander*, No. C-74-1247.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² Affidavit of Fred J. Hiestand, February 17, 1976, filed in Federal District Court in *Black Panther Party v. Alexander*, No. C-74-1247.

¹⁴³ Papers on file with author and delivered to him while in jail.

¹⁴⁴ IRS Sensitive Case Report, No. 94740182H, by Tak Fukuchi, Revenue Agent, with note attached from Mary Ann Meagher: "called Jack Lahart (Justice Dept. Attorney) ... to see if he thinks we should attempt to find a Canadian address for Huey Newton in view of current news article that TP [i.e., taxpayer] is in Canada en route back to the U.S. ..."

¹⁴⁵ Handwritten notes (22 pages) by IRS Agent Monty S. Day, August 17, 1974, 2:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

All Power to the People



porting, volunteering with the many community programs. Many gang leaders and members became attracted to the BPP movement due largely to these practical, survival programs that the Party, in conjunction with the neighborhoods, organized throughout the country.

Gangbanging and violent crime rate decreased, as community activism replaced much of the so-called black-on-black crimes. The Rainbow Coalition out of Chicago is a case in point that included members from the notorious street gang, Blackstone Rangers.

On the West Coast, the FBI played a large role in provoking the murder of four Panthers by the United Slaves (U.S) Organization, while in Chicago they attempted to provoke the Blackstone Rangers to attack Fred Hampton and the Panthers by sending a forged letter to Ranger leader Jeff Fort which purported to warn him of a "hit" the Panthers had ordered against him. There were a total of 38 Panthers murdered by the U.S. Government's FBI, and the local police. They labeled the BPP "Public Enemy No 1."

"I want these young revolutionaries to understand that they will be dead revolutionaries," 1968, J. Edgar Hoover

In other words, this system uses state repression and state sanctioned murder to protect their political and economic power. America has a vast array of formidable protectors that utilize legal and extra-legal means. But even this power has limits and contradictions that the capitalists have to try and manage.

With their botched occupation of Iraq constricted, and their imperial military options having limitations now, with the dollars running out and with a treasury over \$9 trillion in debt....now what?

Now, the people, the communities, must implement the Survival Program, uniting on what all working class people have in common. That is why we point to the Ten Point Program to forge that type of unity.

The Little Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign is one step in this process. We are seeking volunteers who are willing to learn organizing methods to learn to run organizer training sessions to expand the program to multiple low-income communities, where the need is greatest, and build the circulation of *The Commemorator* to inform the community about the real stories that are not published in the corporate media.

While the learned *specialists* enlighten us that *Life keeps getting worse for black men*, we recognize this obvious fact as a consequence of centuries of capitalist, racist institutions that thrive on economic exploitation and promulgate the racist attitude, from the top to the bottom. That is why we need a movement and organization with strategy based on the principle: From the bottom to the top, from the many to the few, building revolutionary intercommunalism, negating reactionary intercommunalism is what we need to do.

To sign up for an organizer training program or to find out about other ways to participate in our revolutionary intercommunalist struggle, call 510-652-7170.

All Power to the People



Government Failing Poor

Continued from page 93

According to June 7 *San Francisco Bay-View*, Jeremy Prikett, a housing organizer who lives in New Orleans and works with Common Ground, said "People with money and power are exploiting this hurricane and trying to shape New Orleans in their image. They are not taking about rebuilding New Orleans; they are talking about revitalizing it."

Organize in Solidarity — not Charity

A recurring theme amongst hurricane victim activists across the U.S. has been for "Solidarity, not Charity." Campbell-Rock stressed that, "We're not asking for handouts. We came here as homeowners; we are taxpayers. It was not the hurricane that made us lose our homes — it was the Federal Government and the Army Corps of Engineers. We have a government that can spend billions of dollars on Iraq, but can't even spend \$1 billion on New Orleans — one of America's prize cities. We can't even go back because it doesn't have city services."

As Campbell-Rock said, "You tell your kids that when they break something, they fix it. And we're telling the Federal Government that they broke our levees and need to fix them."

Thousands of Jobs Lost

Residents of New Orleans are all too familiar with the government's sad record in providing the resources necessary for recovery and basic survival. Person after person *The Commemorator* interviewed spoke about the unaffordable rent in New Orleans which skyrocketed after the hurricanes; they mentioned the rubble and trash still rotting in the black neighborhoods, while wealthier and whiter parts of town look like a hurricane never hit; they spoke of FEMA and insurance companies giving them the runaround in response to their requests for compensation and rebuilding assistance; they spoke about the joblessness crisis which is taking a further toll on people who faced a disproportionately high rate of unemployment even before the hurricanes.

The Labor Department released a report in April 2006 saying that the unemployment rate for displaced victims who haven't yet returned home increased from 22.6 to 34.7% from February to March.

The loss of jobs and inability to get work again in the city has made it impossible for many storm victims to return home and participate in the struggles for recovery. Yet millions of dollars of government money for "reconstruction" is being given out in contracts to large companies for everything except what is needed for the people to move back and get work, and the people these corporations hire, through series of subcontractors, are not the people who most urgently need the jobs to be able to come home and rebuild.

A 65-year old railroad retiree, Mr. Brown said he is one of the "lucky ones" because he had house insurance. "We could wait forever if we had to," he said. But for the victims who managed to find work in other states, he said they "just can't come back" right

now because there is no work for them. When we asked Mr. Brown if people like him, with roots in New Orleans going back several generations, would make it a point to return to the city no matter what, he responded: "It's not possible for the simple fact that there are no jobs."

The ability to recover from the hurricanes' devastation is largely based on economic factors, and the concurrent racial factors becomes all too familiar under capitalism. For instance, Rajah, a black jazz musician from New Orleans, said that he will probably move to Tennessee to find work. He said that the better jobs, many in the tourist industry, have gone mainly to whites so far. Other factors have contributed to keeping blacks out of New Orleans: a brutal police force; the lingering destruction of black neighborhoods; and, ultimately, the trauma that comes from experiencing all this. Rajah said, "For the most part, the people I come into contact with are really psychologically distressed about this situation. For instance, you can go into the white populations in New Orleans, and they're pretty much intact and going about business as usual. But this is not so in the black neighborhoods." He added, "It can be very depressing at times to be here. To see your people and this once vibrant city in this state of devastation—it can be hard on your mind to see this."

He pointed out, however, that the conditions existing in post-Katrina New Orleans are not entirely new. "Really, the situation is the same and even worse than before. I'm talking about poverty, or people not getting the proper educational support." Add to that the brutality of the police, who have always been a plague upon black communities throughout the U.S. New Orleans police can be seen regularly harassing blacks and crawling through their neighborhoods on the pretext of "surveillance." Yet Rajah noted, "the police have always been a dominant and oppressive force here."

Thus, the "natural" disasters that were Katrina and Rita only highlighted and exacerbated a pre-existing, unjust situation.

Government Standing in the Way of Aid

Diane Evans, who *The Commemorator* met in San Francisco, at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, was flooded from her home in Holly Grove, New Orleans, gave testimony to some of the things she saw individuals do on their own, in the face of the absence of government response. She told her story to *The Commemorator*. From the time that she and her family were rescued by boat from her neighbor's rooftop, to the dehumanizing days spent on Jefferson Highway, to the day she found herself hunting for resources and housing in San Francisco, Evans said the government had been criminally negligent to the plight of the hundreds of thousands of other survivors like herself. Of the local Red Cross she met in San Francisco, Evans said, "They were not forthcoming with anything. I had to pry the information and provisions out of them. They finally asked us what we needed, and I said we needed everything: 'We need food; we need transportation; we need phone cards.'

They were very unorganized. We needed some kind of list of their available resources. We were trying to guess what they had — we didn't have time for that."

Yet Evans had a number of encounters with people who helped by refusing to go along with the rules being imposed by whatever government agency was in the way. She said she'd never forget the white man who had seen National Guard troops turn away thousands of blacks trying to escape New Orleans during the flooding, and then made trip after trip in his own pickup truck to get folks stranded at Jefferson Causeway to the Jefferson Highway, where they were told busses would be waiting to evacuate them.

There was also the Red Cross volunteer at the Houston Astrodome who initially said "you're giving me more information than the form asks for," when Evans put in an inquiry for her missing son. An organization with billions of dollars in funding in a city known for its numerous high-tech industries, the Red Cross had its volunteers taking victims' information on notepads that collected in piles on the floor of the Astrodome. But upon seeing Evan's distress, the volunteer broke away from the Red Cross's protocol and placed a more detailed notice for Evans' 32-year-old son on the internet. Days later the woman called Evans, now in California, with the news that someone had seen her internet message and located her son.

There was, perhaps most importantly, the spirit of collaboration and solidarity among flood victims during the harrowing days Evans spent on Jefferson Highway. The scene was far from the wild opportunism and individualism portrayed by the media. People did not steal from each other, but shared their meager resources, Evans said. "When the National Guard finally brought in provisions, the young people were asking for water, and catching it as it was thrown down, giving it to the children and old folks."

Evans' experiences and those of the other survivors *The Commemorator* spoke with show that people are able to rise above the demeaning and self-destructive mentalities — encouraged by the government and corporate media — toward individualism and defeatism. Moreover, these experiences speak to the importance of building strong organizations in our communities — organizations capable of mobilizing to meet the basic needs of our people. The events subsequent to Katrina have dispelled all doubts in many minds about the government's willingness to come to the aid of its black, brown and poor citizens, and they now know not to count on it.

Government Finger Pointing and Distractions

On Capitol Hill, the frenzied finger pointing over who is responsible for the failed response to Hurricane Katrina has amplified. Ex-FEMA director Mike Brown blamed Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff. House Republicans issued a 520-page report indicting the White House for a "failure of initiative," on the one hand. With the other hand, it points to Democrats Ray Nagin and Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco for their failure to help the more than

70,000 people in New Orleans when the storm hit.

Meanwhile, congressional Democrats are trying to milk this embarrassment for the Republican Party for all it is worth which may not be much. Democrats like House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi are using the GOP report to criticize Republicans for their misplaced priorities. But one has yet to hear a Democrat accept the blame for their party voting in favor of a war budget that continues to siphon away funding for domestic resources — like levees. And now they are talking

If there is to be lasting relief, recovery, and justice for our brothers and sisters from the Gulf Coast, we must continue to struggle and organize to win it.

about dismantling FEMA altogether.

This entire framework of their banterings amounts to a distraction. While legislators seize upon the photo ops and sound bites to promote themselves for the upcoming elections, people on the Gulf Coast are still dying; children are still without schools; the sick are without proper healthcare; and families are being put on the streets as their homes are being bulldozed or sold.

WE WANT DECENT HOUSING FIT FOR THE SHELTER OF HUMAN BEINGS. *We believe that if the landlords will not give decent housing to our Black and oppressed communities, then housing and the land should be made into cooperatives so that the people in our communities, with government aid, can build and make decent housing for the people.*

Point number 4 from the "BPP Ten-Point Program."

The unfolding events remind us that the demands made in the BPP's Ten-Point Program over three decades ago are as poignant as ever. The demands for employment, decent housing and the basic rights entitled taxpaying citizens — points two, four and ten, respectively — are particularly timely. Hand in hand with these demands must be action that serves our communities. Because, as Rahim put it, "Basically, there are people here who are still dying because of what our government is doing — and what we are not doing." And so we must organize to help ourselves. Rahim adds: "To be effective, we must work together."

Organize or Die

If there is to be lasting relief, recovery, and justice for our brothers and sisters from the Gulf Coast, we must continue to struggle and organize to win it. Working in organizations in solidarity with survivors will have a far greater and lasting impact than working as individuals.

If you are already involved with an organization working with hurricane survivors that needs help, or if you want to become involved, please contact *The Commemorator* for more information and to get the word out.

All Power to the People 

Free Mumia • Free the Move 11 • Ya Basta! • Dyke Power! Fag Power! • Queers Bash Back • Free All Political Prisoners • Viva Zapata! • Animal Liberation

AIDS in Africa: New Plague or Old Illnesses of Poverty?

Racist HIV Myth Hides Ruthless U.S. Exploitation.

Unlike in the United States, AIDS in Africa is most frequently diagnosed based on four very imprecise clinical symptoms—diarrhea, fever, persistent cough, and weight loss greater than 10% over two months. *HIV antibody tests are not required to diagnose a case of African AIDS.* These four clinical symptoms are identical to the problems created by conditions of poverty that have troubled Africa and other developing areas of the world for centuries. In fact, symptoms of the so-called African AIDS epidemic are indistinguishable from the effects of malnutrition, unsanitary drinking and bathing water, and common curable conditions like malaria, cholera, tuberculosis, and parasitic infections.

Rather than solve the problems of African poverty caused by centuries of ruthless Western exploitation, the U.S. government insists on broadcasting the doomsday notion that Africa is suddenly gripped by a deadly, spreading sexual plague. According to these American health authorities, salvation from sickness can only be found in profitable pills manufactured by the white West and exported to black Africa.

America's Racist HIV Myth

The idea that AIDS originated in Africa is a popular myth without any scientific or epidemiological evidence. News reports that blame AIDS on African green monkeys are based upon elaborate speculation about species-jumping viruses rather than reliable proof. Tall tales about the spread of AIDS are promoted through the most vulgar and racist sexual stereotypes about promiscuous African people.

Still, the numbers speak for themselves. According to the 1999 *WHO Global HIV/AIDS Report*, the total number of AIDS cases in Africa virtually equals the total number of cases in America even though Africa, with its 650 million citizens, has more than two times the population of the United States. Africa is often cited as a worst case example of what could happen in America despite figures demonstrating that 99.5% of Africans do not have AIDS, and among Africans who test HIV positive, 97% do not have AIDS.

While Africa is the frequent target of damaging AIDS media reports, the total number of cases on the continent is relatively small. For example, from 1981 through 1999 cumulative AIDS cases for South Africa, the area claimed hardest hit by HIV, were just 12,825.

Exporting Extermination: AIDS Pills Kill!

It is undeniable that experimental AIDS treatments like protease inhibitors and AZT are all highly toxic, dangerous products. Strokes, muscle wasting, anemia, physical deformities, dementia, birth defects, organ failure, and death are some of the "side effects" of

these poisons. Thousands of gay men in the 1980s and 1990s died from AZT poisoning. Now the U.S. State Department has elevated AIDS to the level of a threat to national security in order to gain public support for exporting AZT to pregnant African women. Outspoken leaders like South African President Thabo Mbeki—hard pressed to explain why developing nations stricken with famine and civil chaos should spend what little money they have on toxic anti-HIV drugs while millions starve—are relentlessly attacked as unfit and crazy by racist Western media outlets.

We invite you to investigate the growing international controversy over the cause and treatment of AIDS for yourself. Clip and mail the coupon below for a free copy of

the groundbreaking book *What If Everything You Thought You Knew About AIDS Was Wrong?* by AIDS survivor Christine Maggiore.

The Truth About African AIDS:

- HIV antibody tests are not required for an AIDS diagnosis in Africa.
- African AIDS is diagnosed by four very imprecise clinical symptoms:
 - Diarrhea
 - Fever
 - Persistent cough
 - Weight loss greater than 10% over two months
- Tuberculosis, malaria, and measles far outnumber cases of AIDS in Africa.
- AIDS is not the leading cause of illness or death in any African nation.

Fight the AID\$ Fraud!

ACT UP San Francisco is the AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power—a militant, direct action organization committed to ending the AIDS fraud. General body meetings are held every Monday night at 7:30 p.m. at 1884 Market Street and our medical marijuana dispensary is open 12:00 to 7:00 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday. Get involved. Join ACT UP! End the abuse of AIDS.

Clip and mail the coupon below to receive a free copy of the book *What If Everything You Thought You Knew About AIDS Was Wrong?* or contact us for more information at www.actupsf.com!

clip here



SAN FRANCISCO

Name _____
 Address _____
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 Phone _____ Email _____

Mail to: ACT UP • 1884 Market Street • San Francisco, CA 94102 • (415) 864-6686 • www.actupsf.com • actupsf@aol.com

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CCBPP STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party (CCBPP) is committed to the goals of the Black Panther Party (BPP) as outlined in its Ten-Point Program which was written in 1966 by Party founders, Dr. Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale.

The Ten-Point Program outlines goals and objectives toward changing conditions of economic exploitation and political oppression in all low-income and working class communities in the U.S. and elsewhere, as the basis for unity and solidarity.

Also, the CCBPP is committed to the concept of Revolutionary Intercommunalism, introduced by Dr. Newton in 1970 at Boston College. Our Revolutionary Intercommunalism holds that there are basically two sides. On one side there is reactionary intercommunalism which presently holds the world's low-income and working communities under conditions of economic exploitation and political oppression by controlling the wealth, resources and institutions in order to maximize profits for the few. Huey identified this side as the leading reactionary side (the ruling class) which consists of a minority, fewer than five percent of the world population. Under these conditions, reactionary intercommunalism, by and large, keeps the poor and working communities on a cycle of degradation, under conditions of reaction, desperation and poverty, with no end in sight. Newton understood that in order to change these conditions and advance the economic and cultural interests of these oppressed communities of the world, disciplined organizations must be built from the bottom up, enabling these low-income and working communities to fight exploitation and oppression by any means necessary (this fight needs to start in the advanced industrialized U.S. because our nation leads the world in political reaction and economic exploitation). CCBPP advances and upholds the goals which the BPP outlined in its Ten-Point Program, and those goals are about ridding black ghettos and low-income and working communities of economic exploitation and political oppression, understanding that we can reach these goals only by seizing the time at the point of practice.

Black Panther Party Ten-Point Program WHAT WE WANT, WHAT WE BELIEVE

1. WE WANT FREEDOM, WE WANT POWER TO DETERMINE THE DESTINY OF OUR BLACK AND OPPRESSED COMMUNITIES. We believe that Black and oppressed people will not be free until we are able to determine our destinies in our own communities ourselves, by fully controlling all the institutions that exist in our communities.

2. WE WANT FULL EMPLOYMENT FOR OUR PEOPLE. We believe that the federal government is responsible and obligated to give every person employment or a guaranteed income. We believe that if the American businessmen will not give full employment, then the technology and means of production should be taken from the businessmen and placed in the community so that the people of the community can organize and employ all its people and give a high standard of living.

3. WE WANT AN END TO THE ROBBERY BY THE CAPITALIST OF OUR BLACK AND OPPRESSED COMMUNITIES. We believe that the racist government has robbed us and now we are demanding the overdue debt of forty acres and two mules. Forty acres and two mules were promised 100 years ago as restitution for slave labor and mass murder of Black people. We will accept the payment in currency that will be distributed to our many communities. The American racist has taken part in the slaughter of over fifty million Black people. Therefore, we feel this is a modest demand that we make.

4. WE WANT DECENT HOUSING, FIT FOR THE SHELTER OF HUMAN BEINGS. We believe that if the landlords will not give decent housing to our Black and oppressed communities, then housing and the land should be made into cooperatives so that the people in our communities, with government aid, can build and make decent housing for the people.

5. WE WANT EDUCATION FOR OUR PEOPLE THAT EXPOSES THE TRUE NATURE OF THIS DECADENT AMERICAN SOCIETY. WE WANT EDUCATION THAT TEACHES US OUR TRUE HISTORY AND OUR ROLE IN THE PRESENT-DAY SOCIETY. We believe in an educational system that will give to our people a knowledge of self. If you do not have knowledge of yourself and your position in the society and the world, then you will have little chance to know anything else.

6. WE WANT COMPLETELY FREE HEALTH CARE FOR ALL BLACK AND OPPRESSED PEOPLE. We believe that the government must provide, free of charge, for the people, health facilities that will not only treat our illnesses, most of which have come about as a result of our oppression, but will also develop preventive medical programs to guarantee our future survival. We believe that mass health education and research programs must be developed to give all Black and oppressed people access to advanced scientific and medical information, so we may provide ourselves with proper medical attention and care.

7. WE WANT AN IMMEDIATE END TO POLICE BRUTALITY AND MURDER OF BLACK PEOPLE, OTHER PEOPLE OF COLOR, ALL OPPRESSED PEOPLE INSIDE THE UNITED STATES. We believe that the racist and fascist government of the United States uses its domestic enforcement agencies to carry out its program of oppression against Black people, other people of color, and poor people inside the United States. We believe it is our right, therefore, to defend ourselves against such armed forces and that all Black and oppressed people should be

armed for self-defense of our homes and communities against these fascist police forces.

8. WE WANT AN IMMEDIATE END TO ALL WARS OF AGGRESSION. We believe that the various conflicts which exist around the world stem directly from the aggressive desires of the U. S. ruling circle and government to force its domination upon the oppressed people of the world. We believe that if the U. S. government or its lackeys do not cease these aggressive wars that it is the right of the people to defend themselves by any means necessary against their aggressors.

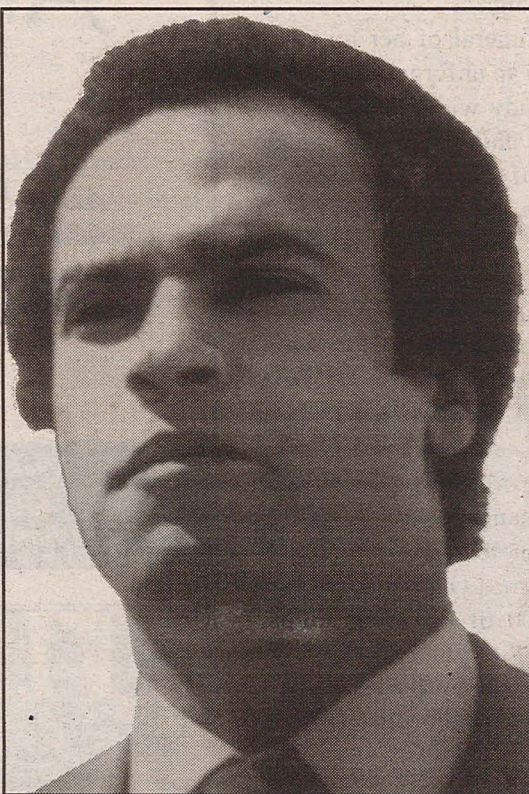
9. WE WANT FREEDOM FOR ALL BLACK AND POOR OPPRESSED PEOPLE NOW HELD IN U. S. FEDERAL, STATE, COUNTY, CITY, AND MILITARY PRISONS AND JAILS. WE WANT TRIALS BY A JURY OF PEERS FOR ALL PERSONS ARE CHARGED WITH SO-CALLED CRIMES UNDER THE LAWS OF THIS COUNTRY. We believe that the many Black and poor oppressed people now held in U. S. prisons and jails have not received fair and impartial trials under a racist and fascist judicial system and should be free from incarceration. We believe in the ultimate elimination of all wretched, inhuman penal institutions, because the masses of men and women imprisoned inside the

United States or by the U. S. military are the victims of oppressive conditions that are the real cause of their imprisonment. We believe that when persons brought to trial that they must be guaranteed, by the United States, juries of their peers, attorneys of their choice and freedom from imprisonment while awaiting trials.

10. WE WANT LAND, BREAD, HOUSING, EDUCATION, CLOTHING, JUSTICE, PEACE AND PEOPLE'S COMMUNITY CONTROL OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY. When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume, among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That, to secure these rights, govern-

ments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that, whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and, accordingly, all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But, when a long train of abuses and usurpation, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism. It is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security.



**Black Panther Founder,
Dr. Huey P. Newton**



Courtesy of Dorothy Bordenave/MLK Center for Non-Violence

Letter to the Editor

Continued from page 9

that these prisons would be filled, the Governor's office and the BPT have rescinded the release dates of hundreds of prisoners. These dates were mandated by the landmark decision of *In re Rodriguez*, 122 Cal. Rptr. 552 (1975). They then used the Attorney General's office to falsely represent to the State and Federal Courts that prisoners serving life terms pursuant to OPC: 1168 of the ISL did not have a right to a PC 1170.2 DSA release date. This scam was demonstrated in the case of *Rosenkrantz v. Gov. Gray Davis*, 29 Cal.4th. 616 (2002).

You can bet that each year when a short fall deficit is created to build another prison or county jail, the politicians will claim that bridge tolls and college tuition fees will have to be raised to balance the budget. I suspect that if the voters do not get together to repeal the bond acts of 1981, 1984, 1986, and 1988, lawmakers will also claim that Proposition 13 will have to be repealed so that property taxes can be used to pay for future short fall deficits. This is not a Willie Horton scare tactic. Every time the Governor loans the CDC \$450,000,000 to build a maximum security prison, the following year it will cost taxpayers twice that amount to open and operate it. I only allude to Prop 13 because according to PC 4401 (f) the bond acts

The expense of these debts is added to the State budget each year under the guise of short fall deficits. One prerequisite for receiving an interest free loan that doesn't have to be paid back to the State is that a county must raise 25% of the cost of building a prison or youth detention center. But under the bond act of 1986, a not-so-wealthy county can appeal to the Legislature for a fee modification or waiver and get up to \$490,000,000 to build the prison anyway.

were created in response to limits on the taxing powers of local agencies, imposed by Prop 13.

Debt expenditure money was used to build the 5,000-bed maximum-security prison in Delano that is supposed to open in May 2005. So Mr. and Mrs. John Q. Taxpayer, be prepared for the next short fall deficit — it will be a whopper!

Sincerely,

Mr. Colvin McCright-B-08892P.O.
Box 7500
Crescent City, CA 95532
A.K.A Mundy

Coretta Scott King

Continued from page 11

scale economic and political exploitation by the power elite. So he began to challenge the US government's economic policies at home, inclusive of beginning to organize a Poor People's March on Washington, while simultaneously challenging U.S. policies abroad, in particular the prosecution of the war in Vietnam.

A demand for integration and civil rights for minorities is a demand the power elite can comply with to a certain extent to be able to co-opt the movement. However, King's demands for economic justice for all low-income people, and an end to imperialist wars of domination began to strike at the core of the ability of monopoly capitalism to expand its reach of reactionary control. It is no accident and no coincidence that Dr. King was assassinated, not at a civil rights event, but in his efforts to provide support and solidarity for the labor movement through his participation with striking garbage

workers in Memphis, and at a time when he was building the Poor People's Campaign.

From the funeral of her husband, we are left with an unforgettable image of the Great Lady widowed, comforting her young children. This image became one of lasting associations connected with the assassinations of leaders arising from the struggles of the people — including Malcolm X, Medgar Evers, and Fred Hampton.

Having no money but a life insurance policy that family friend Harry Belafonte had bought for Martin, Coretta pressed on, beginning to work for the creation of the King Center for Non-Violent Change. She continued to write and speak for the same causes throughout the next two decades.

Perhaps one of the most telling statements about Coretta Scott King's character was made by long-time friend and former ambassador Andrew Young, who said of this woman who was made to suffer so much, "She never complained. The attacks and misunderstandings seemed only to sharpen and polish her beautiful persona."



Black Oaks

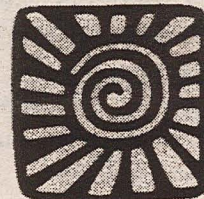
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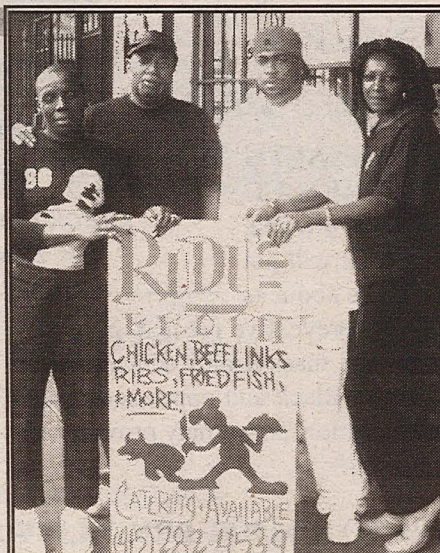
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